Series II.

'Glimpses of Kashmiri Culture'.

By

PROFESSOR K. N. DHAR.
A. S. Govt. College, Srinagar.

1976.

Published by :

Shri Parmananda Research Institute (*Regd.*)
(*Under the auspices of* SHRI RUPA DEVI SHARADA PEETHA TRUST)
Raghunath Mandir, 2/3 Bridge,
SRINAGAR—KASHMIR.

Name of book:- — "Glimpses of Kashmiri Culture". (Series II)

Author :- — Prof. K. N. Dhar.

Publisher :- — Shri Parmananda Research Institute, Srinagar.

Press — The Normal Press, Lal Chowk Srinagar.

Price — Rs. 10.00 (Rs. Ten only).

Year of publication — 1976 A. D.

Acknowledgement.

It is my pleasant duty to thank the elite as well as the general public in India and abroad, for the warm reception they accorded to the series I. The Sharada Peetha Trust has taken upon itself to open windows on the culture of Kashmir from hoary past to the present day through these series. It is definitely a stupendous task; all the same we are yoking ourselves to it in our own humble way and wish to succeed through the blessings of our patrons.

Culture is the culmination of the past into the present. It is a continuous whole with all the vissicitudes it has to encounter during its free flow. It can never be static and is consequently on move rejecting what hampers its placid journey and assimilating what assists it in interpreting past in terms of the present. This is precisely the ideal we have set for ourselves.

In the end, I feel beholden to the Board of Management for giving very speedy green-signal to the publication of this series; Especially to Principal S. L. Sadhu for finding time to go through the MS. and suggest valuable improvements. The Normal Press, Srinagar, cooperated in an ungrudging manner, they also deserve thanks.

Srinagar, Makar Sankranti.

Dated 13-1-77.

K. N. D.
Hon'y Director.

CONTENTS

		Pages
1.	Bilhana—The Minstrel.	1—18.
2.	Kalhana—The Chronicler.	19—58.
3.	The Serpentine Vitasta.	59—81.
4.	Panchastavi—A brief Study.	82—105.

Our Founder President.
Late Pt. Parmananda.



(Ex-Accountant General, Jammu and Kashmir State).
To Whose benevolence the Sharada Peetha Complex owes its existence.

Bilhana—*The Minstrel.*

KASHMIR of yore has been the cradle of Sanskrit lore and learning. From 9th century A. D. to 12th century A. D. brightest luminaries in Sanskrit literature have shone on its firmament. These four hundred years, roughly speaking, form the crux and the culmination of what may be called the creative and original literary activity of Kashmiris in the realm of Sanskrit language and literature. A galaxy of rhetoricians, philosophers, poets, and historians all by their own right brought fame and lustre to the good name of "Sharada Desa', (the land of speech) as Kashmir was popularly known then. They marvellously contributed to the richness of "Deva Vani" (Speech of gods) and immortalized its flavour and fragrance in their thought-provoking treatises.

New theories pertinent to the soul (content) and body (form) of literature were propounded. Tenets of literary Indian criticism were established for the first time in Kashmir. New standards and norms for evaluating a literary composition were enunciated; old ones were refuted by persuasive argumentation. "Aesthetic element" got its cherished place for the first time in the books on Poetics and Rhetorics. To quote Dr Raghavan "If there is a prominent Indian Aesthetics which could be applied to all fine arts, it is to Kashmir[1]

---

1. *Presidential address, 25th All India Oriental conference, Srinagar October 1961.*

we owe it." Among these literary giants Anandvardhana, Vamana, Mammatta and others are prominent.

Such diverse subjects like dramaturgy and philosophy could ably be handled by one and the same person like Abhinavagupta. The versatile genius of Kashmiri scholars is irrefutable and their erudition unquestionable. Even the minutest details did not elude their attention. Their command over language is faultless and their thought rejuvenating.

Out of such intellectual climate, enriched all the more by Nature's extravagant disposition, a unique system of philosophy was evolved known as 'Saiva-Darshan", which is "the synthesis of the realistic, idealistic, voluntaristic, absolutic and mystic current of thought then prevailing in Kashmir."[2] This system of philosophy, to speak more precisely, is a happy compromise between "the personal and the impersonal and the monistic and the dualistic approaches punctuated with the traditions and terms of thought and practices of the Buddhists and the orthodox."[3] Dr R. K. Kaw has one more explanation to offer :- "It has laid emphasis on the need of 'recognition' (Pratyabhijna of 'Self' (Atman), viz the supreme inheritance of man. The necessity of supersensuous experience for self realisation is recognized owing to the limitations of man's sense and reason"[4] Among the host of such philosophers the name of Somananda and Utpala, the propounders, and Abhinavagupta the interpretor deserve special mention.

---

2. *Dr. K. C. Pandey in his introduction ta "Bhaskari."*
3. *Dr. Raghavan Presidential address A. I. Oriental conference Srinagar 1961.*
4. *"Sharada Peetha" Research series, Vol I, Jan, 1959.*

While all these sons of 'Saraswati' or 'Sharada' (Goddess of speech or learning) revelled in their ethereal imagination understandably forgetting the environments in which they were living, one polymath Ksemendra did not lose sight of the society in which he was born to breathe and could feel the ground under his feet, as the idiom goes. A realist by nature and a satirist by disposition he tried his hand on a variety of subjects including poetry, history, rhetorics, prosody, etc, but his realistic approach is pronounced throughout. He might indulge in didactics but the sting of satire is there. He has given a graphic picture of contemporary society rampant with seductive courtezans, cheating 'banias' and cunning and corrupt clerks. In the words of Dr. Surya Kanta, "Ksemendra's comprehensive style, his clarity of expression, his power to use satire to the best advantage and his critical insight into literature have earned for him a place among the masters of Indian literary tradition."[5].

"History" says Macdonnel, "is the one weak spot in Indian literature. It is in fact non-existent."[6]

The conspicuous absence of historical spirit among the ancient Indian writers is more due to their out-look on life than to their incompetence to handle this form of expression. In spite of this obvious discomfiture, Kashmir has made a substantial contribution to the art of recording chronicles in the person of Kalhana whose torch was kept alive by Jona Raja, Srivara and Prajya Bhatta in later years. 'Raja Tarangini', a chronicle of the Kings of Kashmir, is to this day the solitary work on history pure and

---

5. *Ksemendra studies, 1954.*
6. *History of Sanskrit Literature.*

simple. Even though with intermixture of the supernatural and the marvellous, the historical content of this book is not altogether authentic, yet it cannot be gainsaid that Kalhana is certainly the greatest historian in Sanskrit literature."[7]

Sanskrit as such could not understandably have been the language of the elite only as it is often contended, but could fairly be understood by the people in general. In the absence of such a hypothesis, such a gigantic literary activity could not have fructified. This very fact is further elaborated by Bilhana himself when he says :-

" यत्र स्त्रीणामपि किमपरं जन्मभाषावदेव ।
प्रत्यावासं विलसति वचः संस्कृतं प्राकृतं च ॥"[8]

"Where even the women in their household speak Sanskrit and Prakrit as fluently as their mother-tongue".

This inference is furthermore corroborated by Stein when he says, "The continued popular use of Sanskrit even among Mohammadans is strikingly proved by the Sanskrit inscription on a tomb in the cemetry of Bahau-Din -Sahib at Srinagar (A. D. 1484)[9].' It is, therefore, erroneous to assume that Sanskrit as a spoken word had lost its pristine glory. "Brief Sanskrit inscriptions without dates have been found by me on a number of old Mohammadan tombs in Srinagar, near Martand and elsewhere."[10] During this rennaisance when Sanskrit was not only the vehicle of mental gymnastics at the

7. *V. G. Iyenger, Classical Sanskrit Literature.*
8. *Vikramanka Deva Caritam, XVIII, 6.*
9. *Rajatarangani, English Translation, Introduction.*
10. *Ibid.*

hands of Kashmiri scholars but also the spoken word of the people at large, Bilhana saw the light of the day. He had already a tradition behind him, a background worth its weight in gold, forming an indissoluble part of his soul even if he was physically away from his motherland.

The first extant reference about him is given by Kalhana :-

कश्मीरेभ्यो विनिर्यान्तं राज्ये कलशभूपतेः ।
विद्यापतिं यं कर्णाटश्चक्रे पर्माडिभूपतिः ॥
प्रसर्पतः करिटिभिः कर्णाटककान्तरे ।
राज्ञोग्रे ददृशे तुङ्गं यस्यैवातपवारणम् ।
त्यागिनं हर्षदेवं स श्रुत्वा सुकविबान्धवम् ।
बिल्हणो वञ्चनां मेने विभूतिं तावतीमपि ॥[11]

"Bilhana who had left Kashmir in the reign of King Kalasa had been made by Parmadi, the Lord of Karnata, his Chief Pandit";[12] when travelling on elephants through the hill-country of Karnata his parasol was borne aloft before the king. When he heard that the liberal Harsa was like a kinsman to true poets, he thought even so great a splendour a deception. [13]

Some of his verses are also found in 'Kavya Prakasa' of Mammatta and 'Balabodhinivriti' of Katantra; some of his didactic verses not found in the works ascribed to him are also given in the anthologies. This also goes to prove that Bilhana had attained sufficient amount of popularity in his home land even though he had been physically away from it.

---

11. Rajatarangni VII, 935—37. 12. More probabty "Vidyapati" is a title.
13. English translation of Rajatarangini—M. A. Stein.

However, the credit of unearthing this "Jewel amongst Kashmir Poets"[14] goes to Dr. Buhler and that also, paradoxically enough, outside Kashmir. In 1877 A. D. while in search of Sanskrit manuscripts, he came across an old palm-leaf edition of "Vikramankadeva Caritam" in Jaisalmer, formerly a central Indian State and now a part of Rajasthan.

In the Calcutta edition of Rajatarangini रिल्हण (Rilhana) is given instead of बिल्हण (Bilhana.) The astute doctor without any hesitation identified this Rilhana as Bilhana-subsequent research on this subject only confirmed his view. In the Sarda characters "Ra" and "Ba" are apt to be confused owing to their seemingly alike symbols; so the scribe while transcribing the original Sarda characters into Devanagari script must have made this mistake unwittingly. In a later critical edition of Rajatarangini by Dr. Stein, the name बिल्हण (Bilhana) is correctly given.

The name as such is not of Sanskrit origin. Perhaps it has a Dardic base and might have connoted some meaning in the local dialect. This needs to be looked into. The same can be said about Kalhana whom some critics[15] have identified with Kalyana, given in Mankha's "Sri Kanth Caritam". But this inference does not hold water. Barring some prominent names which have a Sanskritic base, the majority of names seems to have been derived from the local dialect e. g Mammatta and other names ending in "tta".

---

14. *A. B. Keith—History of Classical Sanskrit Literature.*

15. *Dr. A. B. Keith, classical Sanskrit Literature.*

Bilhana does not leave us guessing as regards his birth place. "He does not wish to remain under a bushel."[16] He gives a candid description of the village in which he was born :-

"तस्मादस्ति प्रवरपुरतः सार्धगव्यूतिमात्रां
भूमिं त्यक्त्वा जयवनमिति स्थानमुत्तुङ्गचैत्यम् ।
कुण्डं यस्मिन्नमलसलिलं तक्षकस्याभिहन्तु
धर्मध्वंसोद्यतकलिशिरच्छेद चक्रत्वमेति ॥
यस्यास्ति खोनमुखइत्युपकण्ठसीम्नि ।
ग्रामः समग्रगुणसंपदवाप्तकीर्तिः ॥"[17]

"There is at a distance of two and a half kosas from Pravara Pura (Srinagar) a rising plateau named Jayawan[18] in which there is a spring of Takshaka (serpent king) of crystal clear water, veritably a disc to chop away the head of Kaliyuga ready to annihilate the "Dharma". Quite close to it is a village endowed with the virtues, opulence and all fame, named Khonmukh."[19]

This Khunmukh Village is even to-day as exactly situated as it was given by Bilhana some eight hundred years ago. In some editions the name Khonmusa is given which according to Buhler is the correct word. He had advanced a theory that the copyist must have been a Jaina who pronounce "Sa" and "Kha" alike, such as Katimosha : Qaimoh, Ratimosha : Romoh. This theory cannot be termed as correct as it is a conjecture only. I have tried to provide an answer to this controversy like this. The final "ausa" sound is generally changed to

---

16. *Dr. Buhler, Kashmir Report.* 17. *Vikramanka Deva Caritam XVIII.*
18. *Modern 'Zewan'* 19. *Modern 'Khonmuh'*

"oh" in Kashmiri as in 'Pausa' to 'Poh', and the medial sound "O" and "U" are not clearly distinguished by Kashmiris. So the "Khonmukh" as given by Bilhana has come to be pronounced as "Khunmuh". In modern vernaculars also "Mukha" (Sanskrit) has changed to "Munha". There may be one more cause for this confusion of "Kha" and "Sa". Again the "Sarada" characters might be responsible for this. Even to-day the Pandits of Kashmir knowing Sarada script sometimes refer sarcastically to a new entrant to their ranks in the words: "can he differentiate between 'sa' and 'ma'? This clearly goes to prove that the various symbols in Sarada are apt to be confused; only a profound scholar with an immaculate knowledge of the intricacies of this script can be relied upon for genuine text.

This "Khunmuh" village is situated on a 'rising mound' (a table-land, exactly speaking) near the Srinagar Jammu National Highway, when it branches off to the left near Pandrethan at a distance of five miles from Srinagar. In this volcanoic range are situated Zevan[20], Wuyan[21] and Khrewa[22] also. It is at a distance of seven miles from Srinagar as pointed out by the poet one and a half "gavyuti". 'Gavyuti' is roughly taken to be equal to four miles.

The 'Takshaka Naga' as alluded to above in the Sloka under reference has undergone cultural conquest. There is a grave-yard adjacent to it. The water is not as crystal clear as was known to the poet. It is not

20. *Ibid above.* 21. *Now known for cement plant.*
22. *Jwalamukhi piligrimage.*

also altogether circular in shape now. The saffron fields and the vine-yards are even to-day as luxuriant in their brilliance as in the days of the poet. Only the Vitasta (Jhelum) seems to have gone farther way from it perhaps by a distance of two to three miles. Rivers do change their course and it is a geographical phenomenon which will take its toll on any part of the globe.[23]

In these surroundings our poet was born of 'Jyeshta Kalasha' and 'Naga Devi.'[24] His father Jyeshta Kalasha was a commentator of Mahabhashya of Patanjali. In a way his illustrious father bequeathed to him as an heirloom the love for Sanskrit Muse.

No exact date of his birth or death can be given for obvious reasons. Even though he has written profusely about himself, yet he has not given us the dates with mathematical precision. In order to arrive at some conclusions regarding the years in which he flourished we have to rely on stray references about him in the works of his successors or contemporaries, or on the indirect evidence to be culled out from his writings. Happily for us Kalhana has made a reference to the years in which he left Kashmir.[25] He went for a sojourn to Central India in the reign of King Kalasa. King Kalasa was the son of King Ananta whose rule commenced from Saptarsi Samvat 4 i.e. 1029 A. D. to Saptarsi Samvat 39 i. e. 1064 A D. Towards the end of his rule he performed

23. *The writer of this article was afforded an opportunity to look into these ruins when he was invited to attend the inagural ceremony of prestressed concrete factory at Wuyan.*

24. *Vikramankadevacaritam, XVII, 79, 80.*

25. *Rajataranagini, vii 935-32.*

the Abhisheka (Anointing ceremony) of his son and made over his kingdom to him in his life-time in Saptrsi Samvat 41, i.e. 1066 A.D. This can safely be fixed as the date for the departure of Bilhana to Central India. The immediate predecessor of Bilhana, the Polymath Kshemendra gives this detail about the kings and indirectly helps us to form a rough view of the range of years in which Bilhana lived.[26]

Kalhana makes another reference to him when he enjoyed the partonge of Parmadi of Karnata. The Vikram as given by Bilhana has been identified as King Chalukya Vikramaditya VI of Kalyan who reigned form 1076 A.D. to 1127 A. D.[27] Thus it is clear that this illustrious poet reached "Kalyan" ten years in advance of Vikramaditya's enthronement. During this decade Bilhana must have made a name by his talent and erudition which consequently arrested the attention of the king who rewarded him munificiently and bestowed on him the title of "Vidyapati" (the Master of learning).

So it seems probable that Bilhana lived between the last two quarters of the eleventh century. Probably the poet was cut short in his life by 1088 A.D. as he has ignored his patron's biggest military campaign to the south in his Vikramankadevacaritam. This great expedition, had Bilhana been living at that time, could not have been ignored by him while smaller campaigns have been elaborately narrated by him in his Vikramankadevacaritam. Thus we can rightly assume that the span of life of our poet outside Kashmir ranges from 1066 A.D, when Kalasha ascended the throne of Kashmir,

26. *Suvratta Tilakam.*

27. *Dr. A.B. Keith, History of Classical Sanskrit Literature.*

to 1088 A.D. when his patron started his military campaign towards the south. However, this assertion cannot be termed as final because :-

(i) It can also be possible that he must have left Kashmir not in the first year of Kalasa's reign. Kalhana explicitly says that he left during the reign of King Kalasa. It might be any year.

(ii) Moreover, he might have fallen into disfavour of his patron, as the kings have generally been whimsical by nature. Because of this dis-favour Bilhana no longer eulogized him in his memoirs.

One more point also deserves attention in this respect. What could have been the possible age of Bilhana when he chose to try his fortune outside Kashmir. Taking the state of communications and the time it took to travel from North to Central India he could not have been a minor. He would not have been allowed to risk his life on such a hazardous journey had he not been quite mature and seasoned. Let us assume the lowest limit of his age and fix it at 25, if not more. So broadly speaking, our poet lived from 1041 A.D. to 1088 A.D. i.e. fortyeight years, not a span worth its name in view of the standards obtaining at that time. Hence it seems plausible that he lived even after 1088 A.D., might be a retired life; and when he actually breathed his last, remains hidden in the womb of time.

Bilhana, as the tradition goes, has three compositions to his credit: "Vikramankadeva Caritam-[28] a historical Kavya, 'Caur Panchasika-[29] a lyric of fifty stanzas and

28. *Dr. Buhler : Kashmir Report.*

29. *First publish and edited by Dr. Buhler.*

a small drama of four acts "Karna Sundari"[30] One more book "Bilhana Caritam".[31] ostensibly an autobiography, has also been ascribed to him. But in it the name of the writer does not appear any where. It may have been written by one of his admirers who preferred to remain unknown.[32] Moreover the details and dates given in it do not agree with those given in Vikramanka Deva Caritam.[33]

Out of these three compositions only the Vikramankadeva Caritam reaches the highest water-mark. It is definitely a work of mature judgment and composed demeanour. It must have been written before 1088 A. D., for the great expedition of that king to the south, which occurred in that year is not mentioned by the poet. This kavya consists of 18 cantos while the last canto is devoted to the personal account of the poet In these 18 chapters the number of verses. roughly comes to 2500. In this composition history has been wedded to romance and war. King Vikramaditya, his patron, is portrayed in brightest possible colours. His valour, his charitable disposition, his love for fine-arts have been lavishly praised. The description of seasons, the landscape and other relevant topics occupy the largest space in the book. The historical content is definitely subservient to the poetic fancy :-

'लग्नद्विरेफध्वनिपूर्यमाणं वासन्तिकायाः कुसुमं नवीनम् ।
आसादयामास वसन्तमासंजन्मोत्सवे मङ्गलशंखलीलाम् ॥[34]

---

30. *In the Kavya Mala series, Vol I.*
31. *Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay 1895.*
32. *V.G. Iyenger, Classical Sanskrit Literature.*
33. *XVIII Canto.*
34. *Vikramankadevacaritam VII, 41.*

"Like the buzzing of bees engaged in collecting honey, like the new sprout of the vernal damsel, like the blowing of auspicious conches on a birth-day, the spring set in."

About the erotic sense of love, he has to say :–

"निर्मलं प्रियतमं हृदये मे किं करोषि कलुषं रजनीश ।
मुञ्च रत्नचषके मदिरां मे न वेत्सि निजमङ्ककलंकम् ॥[35]

"O Lord of Night (the moon), I have a spotless beloved in my bosom. What will you do with your spotted one (beloved) ? Pour out to me wine in your goblet studded with gems. Are you not conversant with the 'spot' in your lap"

The two introductory verses of the Kashmirian manuscript of 'Caur Panchashika', the genuineness of which is corroborated by Bilhana himself,[36] show that it was written in Kalyana before the poet had obtained the favour of the king Vikrama. The mention of Lord of Kuntala and indignant address to his envious rivals and enemies prove this. It is often ascribed to "Caur Kavi" (चौरकवि) which is not a name but a pseudonym for Bilhana. It is definitely the offspring of a corrupt reading in the colophon :- [37]

"चौरसुरतपंचाशिका समाप्ता"

(Thus end the fifty verses of amor by Caura)

"Caurpancasika" (the fifty stanzas of a thief) or the 'love-lament". aptly called by Sir Edwin Arnold[38]

---

35. *Vikramankadeva Caritam XI, 68.*

36. *Vikramankadeva Caritam, XVIII.*

37 *Dr. Buhler: Kashmir report.* 38. *The Caur Pancasika, London, 1895.*

is a lyric of a poet ready to mount the scaffold for enticing a princess. During this fateful suspense when the life of the poet hangs by a slender thread, the reminiscences of the days spent in the sweet company of the princess oppress the heart of the lover and he ventilates these in a powerful and pathetic versified form. The refrain of each stanza begins with अद्यापि (even to-day). At places the imagination of the poet borders on sensuality :-

"अद्यापि सा नखपदं स्तनमण्डलं यत्
दत्तं मयास्यमधुपानविमोहितेन ।
उद्भिन्नरोमपुलकैर्बहुभिः प्रयत्नात्
जागर्ति रक्षति विलोकयति स्मरामि ॥[39]

"Oh me ! I was the bee who sucked his fill
From fragrant chalice of that gold-leaved flower,
Breast deep. Know I not well how it did thrill
Beneath mine eager clasping in that hour,
When love waxed well-nigh cruel in quick kisses,
And passion welcomed hurts that mixedwith blisses."[40]

The theme of this lyric according to tradition is a leaf from the personal experience of the poet. This can be also an imagined situation which the poets can visualize easily by virtue of their innate productive faculties. The freshness of the poem is eternal.

"Karna-Sundari"[41] is the name of the heroine of the drama bearing the same name. Usually the dramatists in Sanskrit have named their compositions after their heroines. Kalidasa also did the same. In

---

39. Ibid, 35. 40. Versified translation by Sir Edwin Arnold London 1896.
41. Published by Nirnaya Sagar Press Bombay, 1895.

this small drama of four Acts is a love episode between Karna Sundari, a princess and Karna Raj, son of Bhimadeva, a scion of Chalukya dynsty. Like other Sanskrit dramas it is more of a dramatic poem than a drama. The story is common-place with a happy blending of history and imagination. Prose pieces are simple and short. Prakrits have also been laudably employed. Bilhana puts the following compliment in the mouth of the King for the beauty of his beloved :-

> "धूमश्यामलितेव तापनवशाच्चामीकरस्य च्छवि-
> श्चन्द्रो मुक्त इव श्रिया किसलया निर्धौतरागा इव ।
> निःसारेव धनुर्लता रतिपतेः सुप्तेव विश्वप्रभा
> तस्याः किंच पुरो विभान्ति कदलीस्तम्भा सदम्भा इव ॥"[42]

"On account of being put in fire the lustre of gold is darkened as if with the smoke ; the moon is robbed of its resplendence like a leaf bereft of red hue ; the creeper-like bow of cupid is ineffective, the beauty of the world having gone to sleep. Why only the plaintain groves shine before her in their pride? "

It can now safely be asserted that Vikramankadeva Caritam is the poet's last work, and these other two works precede it. Both these works, the lyric and the drama, do not portray perfect craftsmanship in respect of the technique of the language.

Bilhana essentially is a romantic poet. Romantic poetry baldly speaking is the acme of poet's individuality. At the roots of this poetry we perceive the all-pervading sentiment of this romantic instinct inherent in man. Our poet does not dabble in high sounding philosophical

42. *Karna Sundari Act II, 2.*

dicta like Somananda and others which are definitely beyond the comprehension of an ordinary man. He does not either indulge in hair-splitting argumentation on the ingredients of literature as Mammatta and others did. He does not also tag history with legend like Kalhana and his retinue. He also fights shy of indicting the society like Ksemendra. Like a truly romantic poet he translates his emotions as they ooze forth in his heart. He weaves a world of his own in which the inebriating influence of vines and the golden hue of saffron form the woof and the warp To speak precisely he lives in his imagination.

Bilhana's 'forte' is love-milk of human kindness. "The love portrayed by Indian poets is not of the ideal type, of the sensuous type; but yet they reveal great delicacy of feelings and refinement of thought.[44] "He holds a mirror to human feelings in a masterly way and at the same time keeps the nature an eyewitness to this all. He delineates human feelings in the background of Natural surroundings, so that the throbs of man and Nature beat in unison. "By the artistic use of pathetic fallacy the lyric-poets blend Nature and Man into one inseparable whole."[45]

The natural beauty of Kashmir can definitely give fillip to the creative imagination of a poet. While in Central India he enshrined the sweet memory of this land of "learning, saffron, ice-water and grapes, mak-

43. *Vikramankadeva Caritam, XVIII.*
44. *A. B. Keith, History of Classical Sanskrit Literature.*
45. *V. G. Iyenger, Classical Sanskrit Literature.*

ing it a superparadise,"[46] in the innermost sanctuary of his heart. This very facutly impelled him to write exuberant poetry pulasting with his emotions inherent while in Kashmir and acquired while in Kalyan. His language is flowery and his diction flawless.

Unlike his predecessor Ksemendra,[47] he does not seem to believe that the figures of speech (Alankaras) are external embellishments only. He makes use of these profusely and in a dexterous way. His similes are apt and impressive. Even though he uses a variety of metres in his compositions, yet his favourite is "Mandakranta" in which metre Kalidasa has couched his immortal lyric "Cloud Messenger".

Consequently when he takes pride in narrating the two peerless products of his Motherland, it seems no exaggeration :—

"सहोदराः कुंकुमकेसराणां भवन्ति नूनं कविताविलासा : ।
न शारदादेशमपास्य दृष्टस्तेषा यदन्यत्र मया प्ररोह् :॥"[48]

"Verily saffron and the poetic prowess are born of the same womb. outside Sarda Desa (Kashmir). I have not seen these two sprout forth."

To crown all, in the portrayal of human feelings punctuuated with the sobering influence of love and all the more accentuated with the extravagantly kind-hearted diposition of Nature none can excel him in his home-land. He drinks at the fountain of love-a synonym of life- to his fill ; older critics perhaps were right when they classed him with Kalidasa and compared

46. *Raja -I,42.*
47. *Kavikanthabharna. III.*
48. *Vikramankadevacaritam, I, 21.*

the talent of the former and the latter to the "lustruous[49] hair" and the "coquetry" of the "charming Lady of poetry" respectively.

Bilhana has been fortunate enough to receive recognition is his life time, a phenomenon very rare with sanskrit writers. Usually their talents have been sung in panegyrics when they leave their mortal frame. This all goes to substantiate that Bilhana epitomizes in himself a dexterous mastery over sound and sense. His facile pen could clothe any imagination that would strike his fancy in proper words and in proper order. He might have at times spent much ink while eulogzing the virtues of his patron, even then he believed in the golden mean—a synthesis between fact and fiction. He paid back his gratitude to the King in words pulsating with sincerity, pregnant with scholarship and endowed with vibrant emotions. No other better repayment could be imagined. So when he says :–

"ग्रामो नासौ न स जनपदः सास्ति नो राजधानी
तन्नारण्यं न तदुपवनं सा न सारस्वतीभूः ।
विद्वान्मूर्खः परिणतवया बालकः स्त्रीपुमान्वा
यत्रोन्मीनत्पुलकमखिला नास्य काव्यं पठन्ति ॥"[50]

"There is no hamlet or village or even Metropolis; That is no forest or garden or land devoted to learning where the wise, the dull, the old, the young, the women and men, one and all, do not recite his poems with utmost exhiliration."

It does not jar on our ears as hyperbole or pedanrty. It is a statement of facts which may not be palatable to a few, only because it comes from the mouth of the poet himself.

---

49. *A uerse of unknown authorship often quoted in anthologies.*
50. *Vikaramankadavecaritam XVIII, 89.*

Kalhana—*The Chronicler.*

CHRONICLE - writing is not foreign to the imagination of the Kashmiri Brahmins. A host of histories [1] Charitas [2] and Mahatmyas [3] amply testify to this assertion However, the history as it is taken in the modern parlance, is absent in Sanskrit literature. History is not an account of rise and fall of kings but should embrace in its ambit the political, social and religious attainments and aspirations of the people at large. To glean such fool-proof material from Kalhana's Raja Tarangini (River of Kings) will only mean love's labour lost. In the first instance in his time such a conception of history-writing was not at all known; Even the earlier Greek memoirs cannot be deemed free from this defect. [4] Before accusing Kalhana of inefficient handling of the subject-matter, it is to be borne in mind that he holds brief only for the "Rajas" i. e. Kings, and does not dabble in any other literary or historical pastime concerning people. He has very faithfully and aptly captioned his chronicle as "The River of Kings". Hence he limits his poetic description to the kings for and about whom he has written this Kavya. Thus it can safely be stated that Dr. Mecdonnel's remarks about the non-existence of truly historical material in Raja-Tarangini is only partly true.[5]

1. *See under "Sources" later.*
2. *Biographies i. e. VikramankaDevcaritam of Bilhana etc.*
3. *Historical and religious importance of places of piligrimages.*
4. *Dr. Buhler; Kashmir report.*
5. *History of Indian literature.*

Among the galaxy of such writers of Historical Kavyas Kalhana shines the brightest. He is the only Kashmiri author who has taken his assignment seriously. He is the first and the best in the line.

Obviouly enough the name Kalhana is non Sanskritic but may have had some meaning in the local dialect at that time; this is not even now intelligible to Kashmiri people.

Kashmiri writers have shown a preference for coining their names in local dialect instead of Sanskrit over which their command was praise-worthy. So names as Bilhana, Mammatta, Kayatta etc are striking examples of this trend[6].

However, Dr. Stein in his masterly introdution to Raja Tarangini has taken pains in establishing the affinity of "Kalyan", as given in the[7] Srikanthacaritam of Mankha,[7] with "Kalhana" of RajaTarangini:-

Moreover, the commentator of Sri Kantha Caritam, JonaRaja has said that "Alakadatta was actually the "Sandhi-Vigrahaka" or the minister of war and peace.[8] He further says that the stories (Kathas) in which "Kalyan" is said to be proficient are the stories from Mahabharata and other epics. But being himself a man of letters and having taken up the thread of chronicle-writing from Kalhana[9] has also given his local name and has not cared to identify it with "Kalyan." Even though phonetically "Kalyan" can be rendered

6. *See also the author's explantion onBilhana's name.*

7. *Canto XXV, 78—80.*

8. *Not the foreign minister asDr. Stein has shown.*

9. *Raja Tarangini - Jona Raja.*

Our Patron



Dr. Karan Singh Ji Union Minister of Health announcing a munificent donation of Rs. 5,000. to the Research Institute at its annual Day on 17-7-76

into "Kalhana" Apabhramsa; yet we have to rely on the verdict of Dr. Keith who seems to take this conclusion with a grain of salt[10]

Kalhana is silent about his pedigree or the sort of life he lived. His name only appears on the colophons of his work including the direct reference to him by Jona-Raja who wrote some three centuries after him. This establishes beyond doubt that inspite of his being shy about self-introduction unlike "Bilhana"[11] the tradition had not forgotten him and his merit.

Some scholars have tried to identify certain names in the text of the Raja Tarangini as the relations of the Chronicler[12] e g. "Canpaka" as his father and "Kamaka" probably his uncle. It is true that this name occurs frequently and with evident respect also:

वातगण्डं तदुद्योगे प्रतिष्ठासु नृपाज्ञया ।
चण्पको द्वारकार्यस्थमभिसंधातुमैहत ।

"When Canpaka who was stationed as incharge of the 'gate' was ready to go in for that assignment under the orders of the king, Vataganda (Ananda) endeavoured to stop him.[13]

Unless this surmise is corroborated by any other evidence contemporary or later, we are constrained to dismiss it as extraneous.

Fortunately for us Kalhana has not left us into guessing the date of his composition. He explicitly

10. *History of classical Skt literature.*
11. *Vikramankadevcaritam Canto XVIII.*
12. *Dr. Stein, Rajatarangini, introduction.*
13. *Rajatarangini vii, 1177 as also 1586, 1591.*

says that he began the writing of his chronicle in the year 4224 of the Laukika era i.e. 1148-49 A.D. and finished it in the year following.[14]

Kalhana does not brag about the originality of his Kavya but instead very humbly says: [15]

पूर्वैर्बद्धं कथावस्तु मयि भूयो निबध्नति ।
प्रयोजनमनाकर्ण्य वैमुख्यं नोचितं सताम् ॥

"If I again narrate the subject matter of tales which have been related by others earlier, still the virtuous ought not turn their faces from me without hearing my purpose".

He very frankly admits that the tradition of chronicle-writing was very popular even before his advent, but to his dismay these chronicles no longer existed in a complete state in his time. He further says that the loss of such chronicles was due to the fact that one "Suvrata" condensed all these chronicles into one book,[16] hence nobody bothered for the originals; having fallen into disuse, these in course of time, were consigned to the forgotten niches of the houses.

Before embarking on his task of writing the chronicle, Kalhana very rightly wants to be dispassionate in narrating the events. He would like to sit on the fence recording the events in a most judicious and unprejudiced manner; He believes that :- [17]

14. Raja I, 52, viii, 3404. *15. Raja I, 7-8.*
16. I, II. *17. Raja—I, 7.*

श्लाघ्यः स एव गुणवान्रागद्वेष बहिष्कृता।
भूतार्थकथने यस्य स्थेयस्येव सरस्वती ॥

"That talented one is alone praiseworthy whose intellect devoid of love or hatred relates the past anecdotes like an umpire."

The chronicler acknowledges the debt of Eleven works of former scholars containing 'the chronicles of Kings" including the Nilamata Purana. Out of these eleven chronicles only three are named by him and about other eight he is silent. The first title he refers to as his source, is Ksemendra's Nrpavali or List of Kings[18] However, this useful book is now lost along with the works of "Padam Mihira" and "Helaraja' who had also composed a List of Kings (Parthivavali).[19] In view of his giving a direct quotation from "Chavillakara's" uncaptioned work which furnished him with the name of Ashoka[20] and five other ancient kings it can be safely inferred that this work was extant at that time but subsequently could not stand the ravages of time, hence was lost.

Besides this, he made ample use of inscriptions and edicts for building the chronicle uptodate[21]. He could not also ignore the popular tradition which has occupied a sizable portion of his chronicle.

However, on even a cursory perusal of the chronicle we can very safely infer that he had studied the "VikramankaDevaCaritam" of Bilhana, a fellow-poet of his.[22] He has not at times refrained from quoting his phraseology and style even. Another earlier work

---

18. Raja I, 8.

19. Raja I, 17-18. *20. Ibid—I, 20.*

21. Ibid,-I, 15. *22. Raja, III, 378, VII, 935-37.*

which he must have consulted is Bana's "Harsacarita". It is a well-known fact that this historical record of King Harsa Vardhana of Kanauj enjoyed popularity in Kashmir as Mammatta in his KavyaPrakasa has quoted a passage from it.[23] It cannot also be gainsaid that Kalhana was very well conversant with the epics-Ramayana and Mahabharta. In this connection copious examples can be culled from the RajaTarangini. Having armed himself with all this material, he took up his assignment in all seriousness and tried to overcome "the difficulties arising from any errors".[24]

The oldest manuscript (in Sarada characters) of 'Raja' is in the possession of Govt. Research Library, Srinagar. There is another manuscript of this chronicle prepared by one Pt. Gana Kak, with explanatory notes by Pt. Saheb Ram.[25]

Kalhana originally wrote in Sarada and subsequently it was transcribed into Devanagri. However, it is to be borne in mind that the scribes (lipikaras) engaged for this purpose seem not to have mastery either over the language or the script. Hence many errors crept into it. Moreover, Sarada is a very intricate script and the resemblance of several words with each other could only be detected by scholars of profound learning. Unfortunately the lack of command of the transcribers over the language has corrupted and even ruined the text at places This is mainly responsible for the defects inherent in the Calcutta edition of the 'Raja'"[26]. Confusing 'Rilhana' with

23. *Dr. Buhler, Kashmir Report.* 24. *Raja, I, 15.*
25. *Dr. Buhler - Kashmir Report.*
26. *Published by Asiatic Researches in 1835. A.D.*

'Bilhana' is a glaring example of such neglect. This edition was so corrupt that the translation of this gave rise to many controvercies.

Taking cue from Dr. Buhler, who first of all pointed out the defects of the Calcutta edition,[27] the search for a more authentic manuscript was continued by the subsequent indologists. The efforts of Dr. Stein were crowned with success, when he could find access to the "zealously guarded Codex Archetypus (date of composition from1648. A. D. to 1685 A. D.) of Rajanaka Ratnakantha by his successors," through the good offices of Pandit Suraj Kaul, member of the Kashmir State Council and his son Pandit Hari Krishen Koul[28]. This genuine Kashmiri recension of Raja Tarangini solved many mysteries and a trustworthy text of this great chronicle, in the hands of Rajanaka Ratanakantha, was unearthed in 1890 A D. Moreover, Dr. Stein could also lay his hands on the Lahore edition of Raja Tarangini in 1895; it was in the possession of a Kashmiri B ahmin named Pandit Jagmohan Lal Hundu, who had migrated to Lahore from Srinagar[29]. These two valuable finds were instrumental in dispelling doubts regarding the authenticity or genuine-character of Raja Tarangini. Earlier, Dr. Buhler had also been able to procure a manuscript of RajaTrangini, in Sarada, from one Pt. Keshava Raina in Srinagar. This MS, according to the learned scholar, was only hundred or hundred and fifty years old[30].

27. *Kashmir Report.*

28. *Introduction to Raja, page 45.* 29. *Ibid, page 50.*

30. *Kashmir Report.*

However, the credit of introducing this Kashmiri chronicle to the world goes to Professor Wilson. In 1825 A.D he compiled an essay on the first six cantos (tarangas) of Rajatarangini and published it in Asiatic Researches[31]. Thereafter the text was published also from Calcutta in 1835 by the Asiatic Society and later on Mr. Troyer undertook the stupendous task of translating all the eight cantos in 1840 and completed these in 1852.

His knowledge of Sanskrit being faulty, he made the confusion arising out of the Calcutta edition, worse confounded. Then onwards, in addition to this, many other European scholars have made references to this chronicle and have gleaned much useful data from it. Prof. Lassen, in his Encyclopedia of Indian Antiquities, has given a complete analysis of this work. General Cunningham treated its chronology in an admirable article in the 'Numismatic chronicle of 1948. Inspite of all this, Prof. Wilson had to concede that a close translation of these cantos in such a pretty mess with regard to linguistic inaccuracies, would have been impracticable[32]. It is noteworthy to mention here that none of these scholars had seen the MS in Sarada characters. They based all their conjectures on Devanagri manuscripts. Professor Wilson, in particular had seen the MS sent by Mr. Moorcraft from Kashmir and two copies in Devanagri gifted to the India House Library London by Mr. Colebrooke[33]. Dr. E. Hultzsch also utilized the material brought to light by the above mentioned scholars for many of his thoughtprovoking articles.[34] Among the Indian scholars Shri Yogeshchander Dutt's

31. *Vol XV.*
32. *RajaTarangini Vol. II.* 33. *Ibid.*
34. *Indian Antiquary Vol. XVIII, XIX*

English version and R.S. Pandit's translation also deserve mention. Both these works are based on Calcutta edition.

Before we proceed, it is desirable to allude to a controversy raised by Mr. Troyer. He contends in his introduction to the translation of Raja Tarangini that the last two cantos of this chronicle have not been written by Kalhana but are the composition of some other poet. To substantiate his theory he argues :-

i) He (Kalhana) allots to the last two hundred and fifty years double the number of verses of what he devotes to the preceding three thousand and odd years.

ii) The references and resumes given in the VII and VIII do not tally with those of the first six.

iii) Canto VIII relates events which occurred after 1148 A. D.

Prof. Lassen also notes the difference in style between the first six and last two cantos.

In meeting his arguments it useful to bear in mind that:

i) Last two cantos can roughly be called the contemporary history delineated by the chronicler. It definitely deserved more space, because Kalhana was sure about the ground under his feet. The first six cantos are based on different sources coupled with tradition;[35] so Kalhana wanted to skip through these. The matter he was treating was more or less not so authentic from his view-point and so was given lesser space.

ii) The so-called varying references are mainly due to the bad and faulty MS;[36] and to crown all, his incorrect

---

35. See under sources earlier. *36. Calcutta Edition.*

translation. No such contradictions have been detected by subsequent scholars, more recently by Dr. Stein because of the correct text. Mr. Troyer's hold on Sanskrit was not so good. He has translated Mukhtapida and Lalitaditya as two different personalities while actually they are one and the same person[37]. With regard to this Dr. Buhler has to say "He (Troyer) undertook a task very much beyond his strength for which he was qualified neither by learning nor by natural talent[38];

iii) With regard to the third argument it may safely be said that he began to write his chronicle in Saptrsi Samvat 24 which works out at 4224 (Saptrsi Samvat) i e. 1148-49 A.D[39]. It contained thousands of slokas, hence could not be completed in the same year by any stretch of

---

37. Raja, IV-42.43. 38. Kashmir report.

39. Raja, I, 48, 51-52.

Data furnished by Kalhana:—

Total reign of Kings a) from Gonanda I to Yudisthira I	*2268 Kaliyears*
Total reign of Kings b) in II-VII Tarangnas	*1 28 "*
c) Starting point of Kashmir Chronology	*653 "*
Grand total=	*4249 "*
Deduct excess years 25 of Laukika era	*525*
	4224 "
Initial date of this era according to Christian calendar	*3076 B.C-*
English Date upto Kalhana's time	*4224— 3076*
	1148. A.D.

imagination. If he mentioned events happening nine years later (VIII book) in Saptrsi Samvat 33, it only proves that the poem was not completed until after that year. 4) The so called difference in style referred to by Prof. Lassen is not at all detectable[40].

The most unassailable evidence regarding the authenticity of the last two cantos of 'Raja' is furnished by Jona Raja when he took up the thread from Kalhana (nearly three centuries after him) and completed his Raja Tarangini. He explicitly mentions that Kalhana finished the "Account of Kings" with the reign of Jaya Simha.[41]. One fact should not be lost sight of that canto VI ends abruptly which can never be termed as the conclusion. Hence it has been made sufficiently clear that all the eight cantos are from the fertile pen of one and the same author and that is Kalhana. However, it is to be conceded (with all that is said and done) that Kalhana's text of 'Raja', as it is available to us at present, does suffer from some shortcomings. After making due allowance for the corruptions which might have crept into the text by careless transcription and, at times, deliberate interpolations, yet some unpardonable oversights have been made by the renowned chronicler. Kalhana's mastery over the language is also at times doubtful when he repeats the Alankaras word by word particularly in the Canto VIII. At times consistency with the anecdotes related earlier is not maintained and it seems that he was either in hurry in completing the assignment or treated the subject - matter towards the conculsion in a slip-shod manner. In view of his accurate detailing and exactness, it can only be surmised that he did not care to revise his manus-

40. See also under style later. 41. Jona Raja's Raja Tarangini verses 5-6.

cript for one reason or another, or he could not find time to do so.

As regards the over-sights, he has made a glaring error: while describing King "Sacinara" in Book I he extolls him like "Sacipati"; Indra, or the husband of saci (queen), but in Book VIII while giving the resume of the reigns of different kings he mentions "Sacinara" as the "son of Saci" (queen Mother):-

शचीनरस्य सूनु क्षितिं क्षितिशचीपतिः ।
ततः श्रीमान्क्षमाशीलो ररक्षक्षतशासनः ॥

"Thereafter his son (Janakas's) the illustrious Sacinara like an Indra on the globe protected the earth. He was forbearing and his commands could not be disobeyed."[4] .

तज्जन्मा जनकोप्यासीत्सूनुः शच्या शचीनरः ।

"The latter's son (Suvarna's) was Janaka, whose son was Sacinara born of Saci (queen mother).[43].

Even if we may contend that Kalhana has played on the word Saci, yet it is not in good taste to describe "Saci" as the wife and the mother at the same time in respect to one, and the same person. Moreover in Book VIII [44] he has altogether forgotten to mention King Nara I whom he has treated at length in the Book I [45]. Also while giving the names of the lovers of Srilekha queen of Samgrama Raja in Book VII,[46] he has not mentioned Vyaddasuha who plundered the treasures of the King and courted his consort as given in the Book VIII[47]. To crown all, at some

42. Raja I,99. 43. Ibid, VIII, 3411.
44. Book VIII, 3414-15. 45, Book, I,197-274.
46. BookVII, 123-125. 47. Book.VIII 1957

places we are confronted with bad Sanskrit and even wrong metres employed.[48]

Besides this, he has been so much influenced by Bilhana's Vikramankdeva-caritam and Bana's Harsa-caritam that he has not refrained from borrowing their words and even phraseology. From epics also he has enriched his vocabulary and has not resisted the temptation of quoting Verbatum from these. Kalidasa's Reghuvamsa has been also used by him for his treatise and even the thought and diction have been borrowed from it :-[49]

घ्राणहीनं पुरस्कृत्य नारीमभिससार यत् ।
तदेव कामिनस्तस्य नूनमासीदमंगलम् ॥

"(He King Kalasa) had approached the woman (daughter in-law of Jindu Raja of licentious Character), having sent in advance the noselessman (His vita). That very inauspicious man because of his disfigurement was responsible for the frustration of his amors[50]".

Evidently the books which have attracted Kalhana to borrow do come also under the purview of chronicles, e.g. Ramayana, Mahabharata, Raghuvamsa etc,. hence he could not but get acquainted with these so as to make his own composition more authentic and traditionally accurate. The point to be emphasized here is his freedom with which he has drawn upon these and has even quoted the words, vocabulary and to crown all imitated the style. But such lapses are few and far between, and do not, in any way, tarnish his image as a chronicle-writer. Out of a compendium of some 8000 Slokas such defects

---

48. *Book VIII-2701, 3097, 3125, 3238, 3319, 3326, 3380, 2910. etc.*
49. *Raghuvamsha, XII, 43.*
50. *Raja, VII. 312.*

are quite natural when the canvas is very wide before the chronicler.

In his indroduction to his 'Raja' Kalhana very clearly indicates that he would prefer to be a poet because:-

कौऽन्य: कालमतिक्रान्तं नेतुं प्रत्यक्षतां क्षम: ।
कवि प्रजापतींस्त्यक्तवा रम्यनिमाणंशालिन: ॥[51]

"Who else but the poets resembling Prajapati in (creative power) and able to bring forth lovely productions, can place the past times before the eyes of men.[52]" He thinks that transformation of the past into the present can be attained by the deft pen of a poet only. A Kavya has been defined as a composition in prescribed metres, being devoid of blemishes (Dosa) having meaningful words containing Rasa (sentiment) Guna (quality) and embellishments.[53] Such and other ingredients of Kavya pre-suppose a thorough study of Rhetorics, poetics and embellishments. Kalhana has not cared to give any account of his literary attainments. To what ever poetic horizon he reaches is to be gleaned from this chronicle. Therefore we may assert that he is a poet by intuition and a historian by profession. Primarily his concern was to put into words the hierarchy of Kings which ruled Kashmir; poetry was used by him only as a convenient vehicle.

Having read other Kavyas, Raghuvamsa and Vikramankadevacaritam and the epics about which we are sure[54] very thoroughly, he must have gained proficiency in the art of Kavya-writing and there can be no surprise in noticing that at times he rises to the heights of poetic prowess also:-

---

51. *Raj, I- 4.*

52 *Translation by Dr. Stein.*

53. *Kavya Prakasa, Mammatta.*

54. *See sources earlier.*

निर्गते मञ्जरीकुञ्जादग्रस्यत्पुरतः ततः ।
कन्ये नीलनिचोलिन्यौ ते केचिच्चारुलोचने ॥
कर्णिकापद्मरागाब्जनाललीलायितस्पृशा ।
मनोज्ञधवलापाङ्गे तनीयोञ्जनरेखया ॥
हारिनेत्राञ्चलैर्मन्दमारुतान्दोलनाकुलैः ।
सनाथांसयुगे रूपपताका पल्लवैरिव ॥ 55

"Having come out of the grove of flowery creepers, (a young Brahmin visakha) saw before him two virgins donning blue robes and having very sweet eyes. The corners of their eyes were very attractive and were smeared with a very thin line of collyrium, as if this was the stalk of the red ruby-like lotuses used by these as ear-ornaments. To their two shoulders were pinned their faces, as it were like flags, the ends of which in the shape of their captivating eyes were fluttering in the gentle wind."

The similies used in these stanzas are not only very beautiful but also homely.

In his benedictory tribute to Siva and his consort Parvati in book III, the dialogue between the two, reminds us of the same situation in Kalidasa's Kumar Sambhavam[56] Herein Kalhana has most poetically justified the otherwise ugly demeanour of Lord Siva :

मुञ्चेभाजिनमस्य कुम्भकुहरे मुक्ताः कुचाग्रोचिताः,
किंभालज्वलनेन कज्जलमतः स्वीकार्यमक्ष्णोः कृते ।
सँधाने वपुरधर्योः प्रतिबदन्नेवं निषेधेष्यहे
कर्तव्ये प्रियमोत्तरानुसरणीद्युक्तो हरः पातु वः ॥57

"May Siva protect you who in his form composed of two halves (male and female, Ardhanarisvara) gives these replies (to Parvati's queries) :-

55. *Raja I, 207-209.*
56. *V Canto,* 57. *Raja. III- 1.*

"Leave away this elephant-skin". "In the inner recesses of the frontal globe on his fore-head are pearls which can effort-lessly adorn the tips of your breasts." "Why this fire on your fore-head." "From these you may take the collyrium for your eyes" and who even, if objection were raised by his beloved to the Snake, would suffer such an answer."

In the Stanzas below the use of Alankaras (poetic embellishments) has been made dexterously :

१. प्राच्छाद्यत वलज्जवालाकरालैर्धमराशिभि: ।
व्योमपिङ्गकचश्मश्रुजालैर्नक्तंचरैरिव ॥
२. निधूर्मस्य विसारिण्योज्वालांहव्यभुजोदधुः ।
संतापद्रुतहेमाभ्रसुवंणलहरी भ्रमम् ॥
३. संतापविद्रुतव्योमचारिमौलिपरिच्युताः ।
रक्तोष्णीषा इवभेमुर्ज्वाला!भङ्गानभोङ्गने ॥

While describing the burning of the Cakradhara temple in the reign of Sussala 1121 A. D. to 1128 A. D. the poet in Kalhana weaves a graphic panorama of words and images :

1. "The sky was densely screened by huge columns of smoke from which shone moving flames resembling the bushy and tawny red-hair and beards of goblins.
2. The tongues of the flames emanating from the fire the smoke of which was spent-up, gave the impression of waves of gold coming out of a golden cloud which had been, as it were, melted by the excessive heat.
3. The columns of fire strewn on the sky looked like the red headgear fallen from the crests of gods fleeing in scare before the conflagration"

Even if Kalhana tries to live up to the norms of a Kavya as enjoined by the Alankarashastra, yet

---

58. *Raja VIII, 979--981.*

his 'forte' being chronicle-writing, hehas therefore conveniently ignored many of the tenets laid therein. Even though he employs a variety of metres yet his mastery over these is deficient. Some scholars are forced to label it as "versified prose." [59]

In view of what has been shown to illustrate his poetic prowess earlier, this verdict seems unjust. Many such examples can be copiously quoted from the 'Raja' to show that Kalhana is no poet of mean order, even if he cannot catch up with his fellow country-man Bilhana.

The didactic import of his work is also distinctly pronounced. In this branch of his poetic fancy he has amply drawn from the epics, Dharamasastras and Nitishastras :

कुलिशं सर्वलोहानामम्भसां शैलसेतवः ।
अभेधाः प्रतिभाव्यन्ते न किंचिदसतां पुनः ॥[60]

"The diamond can be held as proof against all metals and stone-dykes against the waters, but nothing (is proof against) the false." [61]
His mastery over the pun can be sufficiently illustrated by the following stanza :—

गुहोन्मुखी नागमुखापीतभूरिपयां रुचिम् ।
गौरी यत्र वितस्तात्वं यात्वाप्युज्झति नोचिताम् ॥ [62]

"There Gauri though she has assumed the form of Vitasta still keeps her wonted inclination. (For in her river-shape) she turns her face towards the ravine (Guha) just as (in her godlike form) she turns it towards (her son) Kumara (Guha) (in her river shape)

---

59. Dr. Stein Introduction to Raja. 60. Raja, VI-273.
61. Translation - Dr Stein. 62. Raja, I 29.

the mouths of the Nagas (Naga Mukha) drink her abundant water (Apita bhuri Paya) just as (in her god like form) elephant faced (son Ganesha Naga Mukha) drank her abundant milk (Apita bhuri Paya).[63]

Alankara Shastras also lay it down that every poetic composition should have a Rasa (sentiment) permeating throughhout the length and breadth of the Kavya. To live up to this tenet Kalhana says:

क्षणभङ्गिनिजन्तूनां स्फुरते परिचिन्तिते ।
मूर्धाभिषेकः शान्तस्य रसस्यात्र विचार्यताम् ।

"Suddenly coming to life of living beings and their transitory nature is to be seriously thought over; so the Santa (indifference to worldly objects and pleasures) sentiment will reign supreme here-in in this book)."

This Santa Rasa is very much pronounced in Mahabharta. While defining Santa Rasa Vishva Nath Kaviraja has to say:

न यत्र दुःखं न चिन्ता न द्वेषरागौ न काचिदिच्छा ।
रसः स शान्तः कथितो मुनीन्द्रैः सर्वेषु भावेषु समप्रमाणः ॥

"Wherein there is no Sorrow or joy, nor fear, neither apathy nor attachment and no desire The great munies have called such a state of mind as shanta, where in all sentiments and their consequent expression are equal in measure.[64]

One point needs clarification here. Raja Tarangini is composed of thousands of anecdotes in which individual "Rasa" in view of its subject matter, should naturally run. So in the description of war vira is there; in the details giving amors of various queens" Srinagar" is present. The intrigue and court conspircacies arouse

63. *Translation Dr. Stein.* 64. *Shahitya Darpana, III Chapter.*

"Jugupsa" and the sad end of some kings excites "Shoka". These sentiments are all subservient to the motif of the chronicle i. e. "Santa". Perhaps this is the reason that Kalhana ends four out of eight Taranagas of his chronicle with the description of such kings who gave up their thrones by acts of pious resignation and renunciation. He has emphasized off and on that despite regal glory and affluence, every king, one after another, had to renounce this by the everlasting natural law that nothing is permanent in this world.

"What is born is to die definitely" [65]. Hence every one should take a lesson from this and try to remain resigned and cultivate in himself an attitude which remains unruffled in pleasure or pain, plenty or penury; herein the patent influence of Mahabharata is clearly seen on the chronicler.

Without mincing words we are alive to the fact that Kalhana's poetical prowess was limited by his assignment of chronicle-writing. He wants to be a poet and a chronicler at the same time. [66] Kalidasa did combine poetic acumen with history in his "Raghuvamsa" but therein also his talents and unparalleled skill have suffered a jolt-especially towards the closing chapters of his Kavya. Kalhana has also tried to emulate his example. Let us now discuss how far he has been successful in making a happy compromise between the two.

Perhaps sensing some such insinuations Kalhana has very succinctly made a confession :

65. *Bhagvad Gita, II.* 66. *Raja, I-3.*

"Though in view of the length of the narrative diversity could not be secured by means of amplification, still there may be found something in it that will please the rightminded "[67]

Hence the chronicler is aware of the fact that his treatise cannot boast of diversity by elaborating events, because that would lengthen his narrative and as such he has to be brief and factual. This axe of brevity is to be employed even though the chronicler may not have liked it. Important events need to be emphasized and minor ones skipped over. This very fact goes a long way in proving that Kalhana even though wanting to retain the poet in himself does actually make it subordinate to his skill of chronicle-writing. Not only this he has also set a norm for his chronicle-recording :

"Only that person of merit is worthy of praise who while relating the past does keep himself away from partiality or otherwise like an Umpire"[68]

So, it is abundantly clear that Kalhana would not like to indulge in fanciful hyperbole or otherwise like a poet, but would like to record the facts as these took place, in an unattached bent of feeling. The vehicle for this he has chosen is the poetry, otherwise his motive is to write a chronicle uptodate which had become fragmentary.[69].

The inference that Kalhana is a chronicler first and a poet afterwards, can very safely be made from the preceding stanzas. Poetry to him was only a

---

67. *Ibid,-I,6. Translation,-M. A. Stein.*
68. *Raja,I,7*   69. *Ibid I,9-10.*

means to an end, the end being pure and simple-chronicle-writing. The soul of a chronicle is art of narration. Hence Kalhana's merit as a chronicler can be measured by his deftness in narrating events.

Narration does not mean only flow of events but should also admit of impartiality of the narrator. Secondly, the individuality of characters and their personal traits have also to be taken into consideration. Thirdly, historicity of the narrative is the touchstone on which the merit or otherwise of the chronicler is to be testep.

About the impartiality and independence of judgment as depicted by Kalhana, we have earlier shown his attitude to his assignment.[70] However, as practice is better than precept we have to see the veracity of his professing an "Umpire-like attitude."

Happily for us, Kalhana has lived upto this maxim. He has been a close witness of the rise and fall of kings from Sussala to Jayasimha of whom he was a contemporary. In narrating the events of the reign of Jaya-Simha he has not hesitated to bring into relief his defects also. He has not been a panegryist. He has very emphatically chastized the conduct of high-ups in his own times, the omissions and faulty judgment of the king under whom he wrote. At times we feel that such trenchent criticism could not have been publicised at that time for fear of punishment.[71]

About the exploitation of their subjects, Kalhana records:

---

70. Raja, I,7.
71. Raja, VIII--1950.

सपत्नसादहिनसाद्यपि वा वह्निसाद्भवेत् ।
द्रविणं क्षोणिपालानां जनतोपद्रवार्जितम् ॥ [72]

"The riches which the kings amass by tormenting people go to the rivals or enemies or are consumed by fire." Ill gotten wealth does not last long. In order to illustrate his point he says:

पुत्रेणापात्रसान्नियाः जारसात्तरसा कृतः ।
कुकलाकौशलोद्भूतः कोषः कलशभूपतेः ॥ [73]

"The treasures of King Kalasa which he had contrived to get through mal-practices were very soon squandered by his son on unworthy persons and by his wife on lovers"

Ordinarily like all other Kavya-writers even in his own land,[74] Kalhana should have followed a policy of safety-first and painted the kings only in white splendour; but like a true chronicler he does not hesitate from using black paint whenever occasion arises. In this connection he has placed a host of rulers in the dock.

In this respect we should remember this fact that Kalhana was alive and a close witness of events of Sussala's and his son's Jayasimha's reign. About Sussala, the father of the reigning king, he has not a single kind word and even for Jayasimha he does not ignore to pen down his bad points.

This needs high order of courage and that also at that time when political murders and diplomatic reprisals were a common feature. He also gives a

72. *Raja, VIII 1951.*
73. *Raja, VIII--1959.* 74. *Bilhana had not such historical honesty.*

graphic account of Sycophants, parasites and flatterers of the king Jayasimha who definitely held high office in his government. He is not at all afraid of their revenge and very faithfully paints their detestable figures :[76].

The ruling king also does not escape his chastisement :

सन्त्येवास्यापि विषमा स्वभावा दोषत्तां जन: ।

येषां विपाकमव्यत्वमजानन्गणयत्ययम् ॥[77]

"Uneven, indeed are the features also in his Jayasimha's) character. Not perceiving the excellence of their (aggregate) result, the people have concluded that these were faults."[78]

Now we come to the moot point of historicity in Kalhana's chronicle. He has given us the eye-witness account of at least three kings-Harsa, Sussala and Jayasimha.[79] Herein his historical acumen is at its highest. However in the first six books he has relied on the sources which he has described at length in the begining of his chronicle. He has also taken help from tradition which he could not ignore at any price. In this way if the events are treated in a very loose and general way in the first six books, it is the fault not of the chronicler but of the sources at his disposal. He has tried his best to weave into one the scattered threads of history.[80]

76 *Raja, Book VIII,1611--1614.*

77. *Raja, Book VIII,1555.*

78. *Translation by Dr. Stein.*

79. *Raja, Book VIII.*

80. *Raja, Book I, 9-10.*

The first king of Kashmir has been named as Gonanda I by him and he has been shown a contemporary of Yudishthira of Mahabharta. The date of accession to throne by Yudishthira is given as 653rd year of Kali era. Kalhana has given this very date as the starting-point of Gonanda's rule or Kashmir-history on the authority of Nilamata Purana.[81] However, from Gonanda III he gives the length of reigns regularly. For this he supplies a cogent reason in as much as "fifty two lost kings" he has not been able to identify or locate[82]. Among the fifty two lost kings he has given us names of seventeen perhaps on the basis of the tradition. Still there is a veritable gap of thirty five kings between Gonanda I and Gonanda III which he has not succeeded in filling. Out of these seventeen kings whom he has retrieved, he has given us the name of Ashoka (B.C. 300)- the great Buddhist monarch of patali-putra who had also annexed Kashmir. Kalhana's record about Ashoka is corroborated by his inscriptions and by the chinese travellers. One of the famous deeds of this monarch was to found the city of Srinagar which was called "Srinagari" at that time:

स षण्णवत्या गेहानां लक्षैर्लक्ष्मीसमुज्ज्वलैः ।
गरीयसीं पुरीं श्रीमांश्चक्रे श्रीनगरीं नृपः ॥[83]

"That illustrious king (Ashoka) founded the important city of Srinagari with ninety six lakhs of houses full of wealth".

"The Turkish incursions into Kashmir have been amply dealt with by Kalhana while mentioning the

81. *Raja, Book I, 51, 57.* 82. *Book I, 44.*
83. *Raja I, 104.*

names of great Kushan ruler Kanishka and other two Huska and Juska.[84] while describing these foreign kings Kalhana has shown extreme sense of catholicity. They had embraced Buddhism and as such this religion - a virtual reaction against Brahmanism- also was popular in Kashmir, for which Kalhana a staunch Saiva has no regrets; instead he praises this religion and its founder [85].

These kings founded the towns Huskapura, juskpura, and Kaniskapura now known as "Vushkur, Zokur, and kanispur respectively, the first and last are in the vicinity of Baramulla (Varahmula) and "Zokur" near the famous Naseem Bagh. [86] The chronicler also refers to famous Buddhist philosopher "Nagarjuna" having lived here at Sadarhadvana (the first of six Arhats-Buddhist mendicants).[87] This place has been indentified as the present -day "Harwan" where on the hillocks remains of the Buddhist monastaries are still visible.[88]

Another alien king who retired to Kashmir as narrated by Kalhana, is the white Hun Mihir kula whom he refers as ("Trikotihan"—killer of three crores. [89] After perpetrating countless atrocities, he embraced Saivism here and later out of penitence consigned himself to flames.[90]

Out of the indigenous kings Kalhana has given us illuminating accounts of the following. These illustrious kings are very renowned in Kashmir :-

---

84. Raja I, 186. 85 Raja I, 169-172.

86. About the first and last towns Kalhana refers to them in Varahksetra Book. V,259.

87. Raja, I, 173. 88. Dr. Stein in his introduction to Raja.

89. Raja, Book I, 310, 322. 90. Book I, 309.

Pravarsena II (A.D. 580 roughly):- This king has been portrayed as a valiant warrior; when he was invited to occupy the throne, he was leading an expedition in Trigarta (modern kangra) to recover the kingdom of his fore-fathers. [91] He is said to have built his capital named 'pravarapura, (pravarasenapura) perhaps on the same site on which modern Srinagar stands [92]. However, on further scrutiny and reading through the lines, it can be safely established that the new city was founded on the outskirts of sharika parvat or Hari parvat in Kashmir. In Kalhana's own words this hill was situated in the centre of the new city. [93]

Lalitaditya Mukhtapida (A.D. 750) has been painted in very profuse colours and also at length by Kalhana. Here-in the evidence of foreign notices and monuments is so striking that Kalhana's account does not seem only credible but also accurate. Lalitaditya was a great conquerer and inflicted crushing defeats on Yasovarman [94] the king of central India, Tokharians [95] (Dwellars of upper oxus or more precisely Badakhshan of the Muslim Historians) from where he brought a very astute person cankuna by name and made him his minister, [96] and also some Turks who lived in the upper Indus. [97]. Not only this, he invaded Baltistan and [98] Tibet with chinese connivance [99] and subjugated Dard

---

91. Book III, 285. *92. Dr. Stein in his introduction.*

93. Raja, Book III, 361.

94. Raja, Book IV, 134. *95. Raja, Book IV, 166.*

96. Raja, Book IV, 215, *97. Raja, Book IV 167.*

98. Raja, Book IV, 168. *99. Book IV, 167.*

tribes.[100] He has also been portrayed as having crossed the sand-ocean [101] perhaps in central Asia. In this way we are told that the whole of his life was spent in wars and he perished while with an expedition to distant North in the excessive snow.[102] Not only this he made the king of Bengal his vassal. [103]

Even though his hands were full with waging wars, he did find some time to build some famous buildings in Kashmir. One of these is the sun-temple at Martanda which the king constructed at the site of the Tirtha of the same name[104]. Its massive walls of stones with a lofty enclosure have been clearly mentioned. [105] He also founded the city of Parihasapura which served as the royal residence also. He also built a cluster of temples around it. [106]. This city had been built by the king for merry-making (parihasa) as a respite after strenuous wars. "The karewas of paraspor and Diwar are situated at a distance of fourteen miles from Srinagar on the Baramulla road." [107]. Another two towns namely "Lalitpura" and "Lokapunya;. "Lalitpur" an abbreviation of Lalitadityapura can be identified easily. It is called "Letapor" now, but no remains are seen there above ground. May be these lie buried under the saffron-growing udars.

The "Loka Punya" is the "Lookabhavan" of to-day; the former town did not find favour with the king as it had been designed and built by his architect in his absence[108]. This great king also made elaborate

100. Book IV, 168. 101. Raja, Book IV, 169.
102. Raja, IV, 367. 103. Raja, Book IV, 148. 104. Raja, Book IV, 192. 105. Ibid. 106. Raja, Book IV, 194.
107. R. C. Kak, Ancient monuments of Kashmir.
108. Raja, Book IV, 186.

arrangements for the irrigation of villages by water-wheels drawing water from the Vitasta [109].

The reign of Avantivarman (A. D. 855-883) has been rightly called the period of consolidation for the country. Even though the suzeranity of Kashmir was not extended beyond its frontiers as in the time of Lalitaditya, but the king gave ample attention to the internal problems of the country, which had become more pronounccd during the reign of weak successors of Lalitaditya.

The king founded the town of "Avantipur" [110] situated at a distance of some seventeen miles from Srinagar on Srinagar Jammu Highway. The fame of Avantipur is still preserved by the huge temples he built there, which are still erect though in dilapidated condition. Among these ruins the most valuable are a series of sculptures which have been placed in the Srinagar Museum [111]. His very astute and wise Minister Sura was also as pious as the king. He also founded a town after his name Surapura called Hurpora at present. The landmark of his reign is the dredging of the Vitasta undertaken by Engineer Suyya [112]. By his ingenous methods he regulated the course of Vitasta and the scare of famine looming large every year by excessive floods was warded off for ever. New land was also reclaimed and on one of these tracts "suyya" built a township named "Suyyapur," Sopore of today [113].

109. Raja, Book IV, 191. *110. Raja, V, 44.*
111. R. C. Kak-Ancient Monuments of Kashmir.
112. Raja, V, 83. *113. Raja, V, 118.*

King Avanti Varman died of an affliction at Jyeshtheshvara[114] shrine overlooking the "Dal" lake where he had retired earlier. This shrine is called "Zeethayar" at present near the Chasmashi spring. In his court there were such luminaries as Muktakana, Sivaswami, Ananda Vardhana and Ratnakara [115].

Among the most powerful women who changed the course of the history of Kashmir by their irresistible personality "Dida" deserves full mention. Actually being the consort of "Khemagupta" (A. D. .950-958) she wielded the real regal power, as her consort was a weakling given to licentious habits. She was the daughter of "Simha Raja" the king of Lohara [116]. She tried to give clean administration to the people by getting rid of corrupt ministers and even the prime-minister phalguna [117]. Many rebellions raised their head but were quelled by Dida as she did not show any mercy. [118] After the death of her husband she ruled the country as a regent for minor Abhimanyu. [119] However, Abhimanyu died prematurely and his son NandiGupta was installed on the throne by Dida his grandmother. He ruled for one year only and died of "witch craft" employed by her grandmother [120]. Her other grand sons Tribhuvana and Bhima Gupta were also despatched to the other world in the same way and path became clear for the queen to ascend the throne herself [121]. She had

114. *Raja, Book-V 123, 126.*

115. *Muktakana and Siva swami are quoted as poets by Ksemendra in his Kavikanthabharna. No extact work of theirs has come down to us so far.* 116. *Lohara has been identified as Lorin in Poonch.* 117. *Raja, VI, 176. Raja VI 200, 203.*

118. *Raja, VI, 183.* 119. *Ibid.* 120. *Raja, VI, 310.*

121. *Raja, VI, 323.*

a love affair with Tunga a cowhered boy from Poonch and made him her prime-minister [122].

After annointing her brother's son "Samgrama Raja" as the Yuva Raja she died in A.D. 1003 [123] after having ruled for 53 long years both as a regent and a monarch in a most ruthless way. After the assasination of Sussala (A.D. 1128), Jayasimha ascended the throne in the face of conspiracies, intrigues and famine [124]. This is the last king of Kashmir as narrated by Kalhana. His reign was marked by the revolt of Damaras an in the end the king had to make a compromise with them so that the troubles in the land would [125] end. In this way the chronicler has described the reigns of 109 kings from Gonanda I to Jayasimha spreading over a period of 1182 B C. to 1149 A.D. As has been said earlier, Kalhana has given the tenure of reigns of each king from Gonanda III and prior to him the dates have been given in a hyperbolic manner; these have not been consequently added to the span of years given above. The exact number of verses he has employed to condense this account is 7126.

Kalhana is at his best when he gives an exact topographical account of ancient Kashmir. The veracity of his interest in this field can be very conveniently established even now after such a lapse of time; It seems probable that he had visited each and every place before describing it in words. The exactness of their position and accurate description are a feather to his cap. By even a cursory perusal of the chronicle

---

122. Raja, VI, 318, 320. *123. Raja, Book VI 355, 365.*
124. Raja, Book VIII, 1349.
125. Raja, Book VIII, 1535, 1538.

the geography of Kashmir can be built with precise dexterity. Copious examples can easily be gleaned from the chronicle to illustrate this point. About the sanctity of the soil of his land he does not exaggerate when he says :-

चक्रभृद्विजयेशादिकेशवृशानभूषिते ।
तिलांशोपि न यत्रास्ति पृथव्यास्तीर्थंवहिष्कृत: ॥ [126]

"(Where in my county) keshava (visnu) and Isana (Siva) shine like chakrabrt and Vijayesa and also in other forms, there is not space even as a fraction of sesamum seed without having a Tirtha."

To this day, the whole valley is strewn with holy places springs, and temples and even every pebble of this land has been deified.

The names of towns and villages have नगर Nagara, पुर Pura, भोग Bhoga, धाम Dhama, and ग्रामा Grama, as endings respectively, but in Kashmiri pronounced as नगर. Nagra पोर, Pora, बुग, Bug, होम, Homa, गाम Gama, respectively; श्रीनगर Srinagar e. g. ललितपुर Lyatapora, शालिभोग, Shalabug, दन्यहोम Danyahoma, and चंडी गाम Chandigama. Perhaps the best tribute we can pay to the the precision with which Kalhana has penned down topography is the route of vitasta with its serpentine flow. The names of places through which it flows have been faithfully recorded. The Kashmiri बुग (Buga) is evidently derived from भोग (Bhoga) meaning property. [127].

Even though Kashmir valley is hemmed in between

126. Raja, Book I, 138.
127. V. S. Apta, Skt English Dictionary.

continuous chains of mountains, yet Kalhana has given us a lucid description of the 'Dvaras' or gateways to Kashmir. Through these 'dvaras' invasions took place as also the traffic on both sides was maintained to and fro.

At the eastern corner of the Pir Panjal range Banasala [128] has been mentioned. A castle had been built there perhaps as a watch-tower also. This pass can be easily identified as Banihal nowadays. Anantvarman's Minister Sura built a town Surapura, [129] modern Hurpor which has been also mentioned as an entrance to the valley. Herein also a watch-tower was built [130]. This route connected RajaPuri (Rajouri) with the valley. This road was also known as "Salt road," as alluded to by Ksemendra, [131] as the salt has been all along an imported commodity into Kashmir.

The other route which connected Kashmir with Lohara (modern Lohrin) and Parantosa (Poonch) passing through the Tosamaidan was very well known at that time. [132] The ancient name of this route was Karkota Dranga.

Even though the village Dranga situated at the foot of the hill still bears that name, yet Dranga in Kalhana's time was an equivalent of watch- station [133]. The mountain-ridge known nowadays as Kakudar (Kashmiri) is a corrupt form of KaraKota dhara. Tosa maidan of present day is made up of "Tausi" the plain of "Tohi" as known in poonch and the persian 'maidan' (a plain)

---

128. Raja VIII, 1665.
129. Raja, III, 227. 130. Raja V, 39. 131. Samayamatrika II, 90. 132. Raja VII, 140. 133. Raja VIII, 1596.

The frontiers of ancient Kashmir as narrated by Kalhana should also deserve mention here. The actual territory on which the monarch at Srinagar ruled can be ascertained by the reference to chiefs and independent Rajas bordering on the outskirts of the valley beyond mountains. On the southeast Kashtavata (modern Kishtwar) and Bhadravakasa (modern Badarwah) were ruled by the local Hindu rajas [134]. The Rajas of chamba (ancient champa) often had matrimonial alliances with the Lohara Kings which reigned over Kashmir [135]. To the west of champa and south of Bhadravakasa was situated Vallapura the Billavar of to-day in Jammu district [136]. The chieftains of this territory were independent and have been described by Kalhana often.

To the south west and west of Kashmir lay the hill-states of Darvabhisara [137]. Actually it is combination of Darvas and Abhisaras finding mention in Mahabharta also. The prominent principality of this region was Rajapuri known as Rajouri to-day. Owing to its strategic position of being on the route to plains, the rulers of Kashmir always tried to subjugate it [138]. To the North-west of Rajapuri was the territory of Lohara-the moden Lorin (now in poonch district). The chiefs of this family ruled Kashmir also for some time [139]. In those times Parantosa (Poonch) was included in Lohara.

On the North west of Parantosa the valley of Kashmir

134. *Raja VIII, 501, 509.*
135. *Raja VII, 1118.* 136. *Raja VII, 220.*
137. *Raja I, 138, 180.* 138. *Raja VII, 339, 973.*
139. *Raja VIII, 24.*

was situated. Vitasta flowed in between the valley and further to the west lay the Kingdom of Urasa, district Hazara of to-day to which many expeditions by kings of Kashmir were led [140].

The tract of land now known as keran or karnaha bore the old name of karnaha, though under local rule, paid tribute to Kashmir kings [141]. The valley of Kishenganga was known as Drava derived from Duranda as given by Kalhana. [142] This was a feudatory state of Kashmir and one of the most sacred Tirthas of Kashmir 'Sarada' is situated therein. This is now under the unauthorised rule of Pakistan.

At the other end of this valley the territory of Dards (Dard-Desa) [143] is located. It was a separate kingdom though small in extent. This is, therefore, in nutshell the political topography as given by Kalhana about the Kashmir of his times.

As has been said earlier, Kalhna is concerned only with the rise and fall of kings and people at large have been left untouched by him directly. However, the mercurial fate of kings which at times smiled at them and at times frowned also, has afforded sufficient opportunites to him to study the behaviour and character of his people.

The most noteworthy trait of Kashmiri character is its tolerance and catholicity. There are numerous examples in his chronicle to show that Buddhist viharas and stupas were built side by side with Visnu and Siva temples. The great conqueror Lalita Ditya though

---

140. Raja, V-217
141. Raja VIII, 2485. *142. Raja VIII, 2709.*
143. Raja I, 312, VII, 911.

himself a Vaisnava erected a massive Buddhist vihara at his newly built capital parihasapura. [144]. Even though the king professed a certain faith, his ministers or people could subscribe freely to any other faith. King Avanti Varman was a Vaishnava but his minister Sura was a Saiva and there was no tension between the two on this score. [145]. Even the Kashmir rulers did not hesitate to appoint ministers of foreign descent and foreign faith. Cankuna the Turk was the minister of Lalitaditya Mukhtapida. The secular out look towards life was ever present in Kashmir even in those hoary days.

These foreigners like Khasas, Bombas, Turuskas, Dards and Bhautiyas etc were free to practise their own faith and if they felt impressed by Hindu or Buddhist out-look on life and embraced one of these, there was no compulsion in this behalf. Not a single communal trouble is mentioned by Kalhana in his chronicle. The catholicity of a Kashmiri can very faithfully be proved by the existence of Turuska-Raja Bhairava [146] a siva shrine at the new colony Narsinghgarh, Sringar. As the name conclusively suggests that a foreign Turk has been made into a Bhairava [147] and is being propitiated even now regularly. The foreign kings like Huska, Juska, and Kanishka ruled over the country and have left their name in the annals of Kashmir history by founding cities after their names.[148]

Kashmiris according to him are also fatalists of the highest order. They ascribe all their woes and

---

144. Raja II, 45. 145. Raja IV, 211.

146. A form of Siva which are eight all told.

147. Turushka SKT, 'Turk'-English. 148. Referred to earlier.

otherwise to the unseen and unknown fate. perhaps this trait in their character has to a large extent deprived them of their initiative but at the same time has also afforded them calm composure at the changes which so frequently took place at that time :-

अचिन्तयच्च संभ्रन्तः कथमेतद्भविष्यति ।
उवाच च विधेः शक्तिमचिन्त्यां कलयंश्चिरम् ॥ [149]

"He (Guru Isana) was amazed and thought how this would come about. Pondering for long he said (to himself) that the power of fate is unpredictable." The people of Kashmir were so much enthralled by this unseen power of fate that Kalhana says that "fate is the mine of all miracles."

संवाश्चर्यनिधिः विधिः [150]

The firm belief in what is ordaincd already can be illustrated eloquently by this :

लक्ष्मी तडिल्लता कीर्तिबलाका शौर्यगर्जितम् ।
प्रतापशक्रचापं च भागधेयाम्बुदानुगम् [151]

"The lightening of good fortune, the crane of fame, the thunder of bravery, and the rainbow of glory come in the wake of the cloud of fate."

As a natural corollary to the above trait, Kashmiri character has firm belief in Divine retribution. Evil doer can in no way reap a harvest of virtue. Only good actions can be rewarded and bad deeds will receive punishment sooner or later. There is no escape from this :

---

149. Raja II, 92. *150. Raja II, 94.*
151. Raja VII, 1455.

प्रजाभिशापे पतिते नृपस्योन्मार्गवर्तिन; ।
त्रिंशद्विंशाः सुतास्तस्य व्यपद्यन्तामयं विना ॥ [152]

"Cursed by the oppressed subjects, the king's (shankar Varman's) who was taking to evil path, some twenty or thirty sons died without being ill (suddenly)."

The Kashmiri subjects being powerless before tyrants invoked the Divine wrath over them and felt gratified to see that such despots fleecing their subjects did lose family, life, name, and even glory. [153]

Since good deeds are rewarded, hence the Kashmiris have all along been charitable-this being a good deed, helping the needy. The importance of charity has been extolled and consequently practised. Alms giving has been stressed in Niti Shastras as well as in the Mahabharta also, and is an inalienable ingredient of Hindu culture. Kalhana says that even if wealth may be got through fraud but becomes righteous if given in charity. [154]

As a matter of fact, a peoples' revolt has never taken place in Kashmir as narrated by Kalhana.

The kings often squeezed blood from their subjects who were already groaing under the weight of their abject poverty. Moreover the favourites of kings exploited them to their fill. Perhaps they drew satisfaction from the Fatalism and the Divine retribution present in their character. Indigenous rule at times changed hands with foreign domination. Intrigue, treason and lust reigned supreme in royal courts. To all this,

152. Ibid V, 211.
153. Ibid IV, 701. *154. Ibid VII, 1551.*

Kashmiris reacted in a most stoical way. Whenever counter-conspiracies are hatched, it is not the Kashmiri but a foreigner finding favour with the king. Sometimes revolutions of far-reaching consequences rocked their nativeland but they sat with fingers crossed. This clearly shows that they did not feel any sense of parttipation or belonging with high-ups above them. Hence Kalhana very faithfully draws the picture of idle and indifferent crowds in the bazars :-

लोको विरक्तः सेत्वग्रे दामादैः सह संगरम् ।
ददर्शाश्युजीलागिमिव निर्विक्रयः प्रभोः ॥ [155]

"The indifferent crowds without any feelings whatso ever, looked at their king fighing with his contenders at the bridge, as if it was a horse-show on the first day of Asvin Month,"

In view of such a pacifist and indifferent attitude to life, Kashmiri character has obviously been non-militant. Inflicting injury on others could not be in their blood as they believed in Divine retribution. Violence in any form cannot be termed as a noble act, being essentially an evil action, the Kashmiris refraine from inulging in such actions. Absence of militant traits in their character has given ample opportunities to Kalhana to jeer at his own country-men :-

अन्तरङ्गाश्च चङ्गाद्या ये भूवंस्तुङ्गमन्त्रिणः ।
तैः स्त्रीवदासितं तूष्णीं त्रस्तैः शस्त्रान्वितैरपि ॥ [156]

"Canga etc who were the confidents and advisers of Tunga became dumb-founded with terror like women, though being armed."

---

155. Raja VII, 87. *156. Raja VIII, 2262.*

Consequently Kashmiri soldiery was undependable and the kings had to employ mercenaries from fighting clans in the adjoining areas. The pepole detested war and when a foreign army came to invade them, they felt despondent. They could never think of giving it a fight:-

अकाण्डाम्बुदजाड्येन पीडिताङ्ग इवाभजत् ।
परचक्रोदयेनाशु लोकः शिथिलशक्तिताम् ॥[157]

"At the sight of a hostile army the people felt their bodies aching as if paralysed by the sudden appearance of untimely clouds, and their energy began to give way"

A Kashmiri could never be a spendthrift in as much as he had to provide for the rainy day. Such "rainy days" were legion in his time in the shape of famines seiges, and invasions. So, he is calculating in expendi.ure and does not waste his hard-earned money. Even the kings learnt the utility of such wise-spending:-

निर्माणलोठनैर्धाम्नामजस्रं वाजिनां क्रयैः ।
काश्मीरिकोऽपि चक्रे स न मृत्स्करसाद्धनम् [158]

"(The king Uccala) a Kashmiri as he was, did not invest his riches in building and dismantling palaes time and again; or purchasing horses only to make these a part of the dust or the robbers (respectively)"

These pages have most succinctly brought into bold relief the claims of Kalhana as a chronicler. Since he is the first to initiate this form of literary-writing yet, as has been shown, he is humble and does not brag about his prowess in this field. He may not touch the

157. *Raja VIII, 2262.* 158. *Raja VIII, 73.*

high water-mark of historical attitude of mind, but is very careful about his shortcomings also. All the criticism that is levelled against him does not ruffle him.

No better tribute could be paid to the denizens of this land of "learning, palacial houses, saffron, icy water and grapes difficult to find in heaven even,"[159] for their piety and spiritual attainments:

विजीयते पुण्यबलैर्बलैर्यत्तु न शस्त्रिणाम् ।
परलोकात्ततो भीतिर्यस्मिन्निवसतां परम् ।। [160]

"The inhabitants of this land can be conquered only by spiritual force and never by brute-force of arms, hence they have the fear of the other world only"

159. *Raja I, 42.*
160. *Raja I, 39.*

The Serpentine Vitasta.

FROM times immemorial rivers in India have been treated as sacred.

After the Aryan occupation of the North when towns and cities began to be built on the banks of rivers, their utility could not be over looked. Hence by way of gratitude the rivers were deified and varied mythological background was woven around these to justify their deification. [1] It was believed that the violent form of rivers in the shape of floods etc could be averted by propitiation; Hence their being elevated to godly position can be easily understood. Whatever the religious importance of these rivers, it cannot be gainsaid that the economic gains the people derive from these rivers are immense. The Nature-worship as extolled in the Vedas is the patent manifestation of the gratitude the Aryans owe to her salutary aspect which provided them peace and comfort in every sense of the world. Hence in the Rgveda [2] the Rsis have all praise for the rivers.

In this Sukta direct reference to Vitasta has been made along with other prominent rivers of North India. Even in the Mahabharata this river has received mention and its sanctity even in those times attested. [3] These references go a long way in proving that this river of Kashmir was very well known in India and it was

---

1. *Mahatmyas or the books dealing with the religious importance are perhaps available on each and every river in India.*
2. *Rgveda, Nadisukta 1-27-5.* 3. *Mahabharata III, 90.*

held in great respect being a Tirtha of repute.

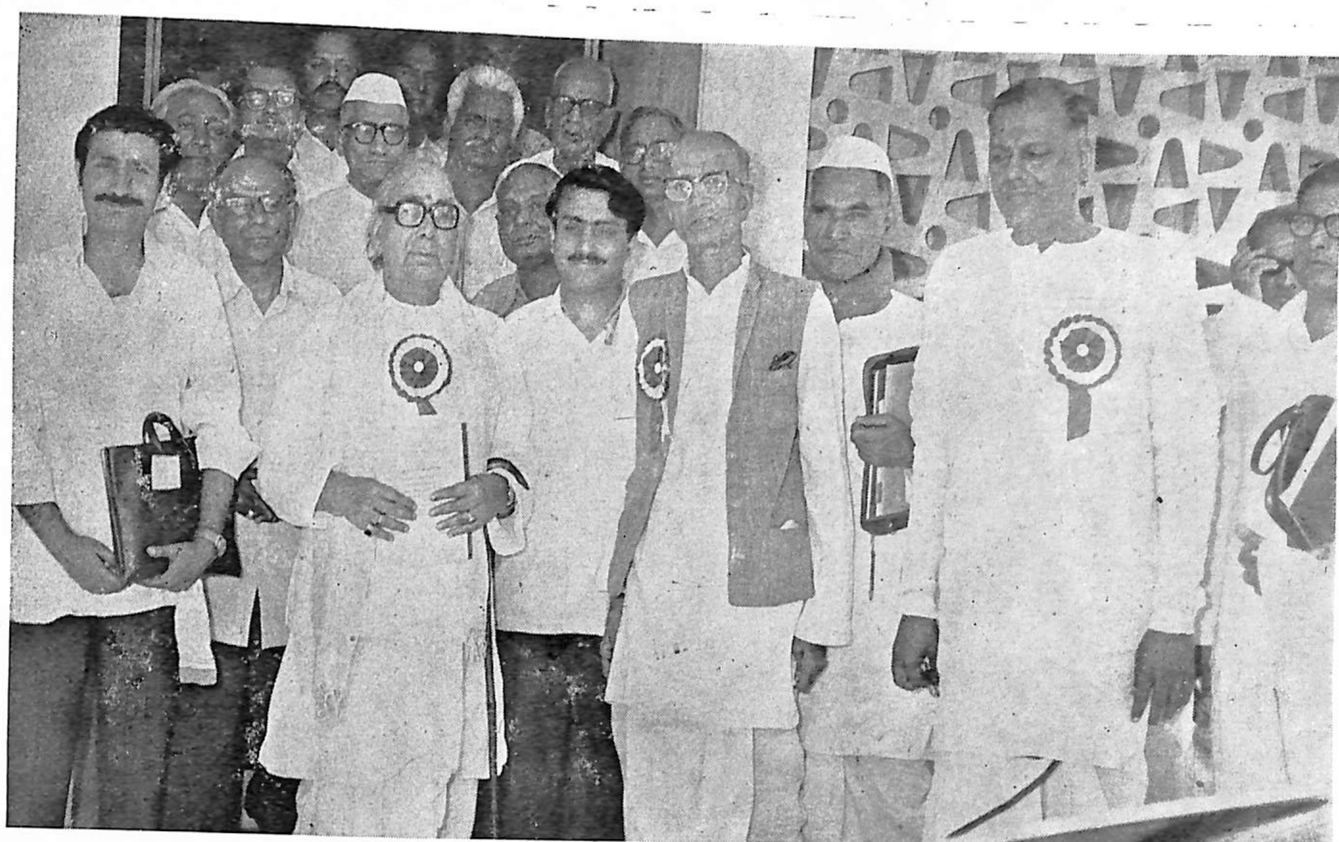
Nilamatapurana deals profusely with the ancient geographical History of Kashmir. This river has also been called the "Nilja" the daughter of NilaNaga which establishes its link directly with Nilanaga the son of Kashyapa [4] who drained out the water from the "Satisar" and the land thus reclaimed was named "Kashmir," and then handing over the authority to his son, the Rsi set out for pennance.

Kalhana also corroborates this account [5]. However, when the valley had become waterless (निस्तोयं) the need for water for maintaining life was felt all the more, and in an allegorical manner the birth of Vitasta has been desrcibed in the Nilamata.[6] The contact with pisacas had made the inhabitants of the valley unclean, hence to purify them Kashyapa requested Lord Siva to prevail upon his consort " parvati" to manifest herself in the form of a river. The Goddess asked her lord to make an opening through which she could come to surface after assuming the form of a river[7]. Thereupon Lord Siva struck the ground near the abode of Nilanaga with his trident which measured one "Vitasti" [8] and through this fissure the goddess parvati gushed forth in the form of Vitasta [9]. The name Vitasta was given to her (this river) by Lord Siva himself. Lord Siva made a fissure measuring a Vitasti and brought forth this

4. *Nilamata purana Edited by R.L. Kanjiial and J.D. Zadoo 65-66 and 217-218.*

5. *Rajatarangini Edited by Stein 125-128.* 6. *Nilamata-331-334.*

7. *Ibid-336-337.* 8. *Vitasti means a measure of length equal to 12 angulas (being the distance between the extended thumb and the little finger, Apte's Skt English dictionary.* 9. *Nilamata 339-340.*



L. to R.

Dr. Kamalapati Tripathi Union Minister of Railways and President All India Sanskrit Sahitya Sammelan, and Dr. B. V. Keskar, Chairman National Book Trust, after the I Series was Presented to them at Mavalankar Hall New Delhi, on the occasion of A. I. Rajya Bhasha Sammelan held on 14-5-'76.

holy river out of the underworld. However, Kalhana describes clearly that this "Nila Kunda" was circular in shape which acted as a "Royal Parasol" for the King Nila[10]. Different names given to this river are Nilaja, Nilakunda, [11] and Vitasta, wheras last is more famous and current from the earliest times as shown earlier:-

तस्याः नाम वितस्तेति कृतवान् शंकरः स्वयम् ।
वितस्तिमात्रं गतं तु शूलेन कृतवान हर ।
रसातलगता येन निष्कान्ता सा सरिद्वरा ॥

The shape of this "Kunda" is now octagonal perhaps due to the rennovations made in it by later Kings, especially the Moghuls.

No less than sixty rivers of Kashmir and Madra[12] have been referred to in the Nilamata[13]. But amongst them Vitasta wields the highest importance and respect which can be testified by an account in the Nilamata that this river twice disappeared and only consented to filow permanently when given the company of other goddesses i.e. Ganga in the form of Sindhu in Kashmir, Godavari in the form of "Gudar"[14] and Vishoka[15] in the form of Lakshmi. This very river Veshav hasbeen described as having come form the mouse-hole[16] आखुबिलेन which at present forms the waterfall of "Aharbal" famous throughout the world.

This legend of manifesting and then disappearing perhaps alludes to more than one source of Vitasta. On second appearance it began to flow from the Naga of "Panchahasta"[17] modern Panzeth

10. *Raja I, 28.* 11. *Nilamata.* 12. *Modern Sialkot.*
13. *Dr. Veda kumari, Nilamatapurana Vol I.* 14. *In Kulgam Tehsil of Anantnag District.* 15. *Modern Vashiva.* 16. *Nilamata-380.*
17. *Ibid-346.*

in the Divsar Tehsil of Anantnag district. The third appearance took place from "Narasinhashrama"[18]. Even thc "Vitastamahatmya" does also mention its second source at "Vitastatra" the present "Vethavotur" situated some two miles below from Verinag to the north-west.

Next to Nilamata in antiquity and credence is the Kavya of thirty-two cantos "Haracaritacintamani"[19] by poet Jayadratha Rajanaka brother of Saivacaraya Jayaratha, who composed the saiva-treatise named "TantraLokaviveka. This Kavya of Jayadratha gives a vivid description of piligrimages of Kashmir and also reproduces faithfully from "Nilamata" of course, the origin of Vitasta-how it earned such a name.[20].

It has been owned by Kalhana himself that he had Nilamata before him when he undertook to pen down his chronicle of Kashmir kings [21]. There fore he follows faithfully the account regarding the origin and the name of Vitasta as given in Nilamata:-

उद्यैर्द्वैतस्तनिष्यन्दद्दण्डकुण्डातपत्रिणा ।
यत्सर्वनागाधीशेन नीलेन परिपाल्यते ॥

"This Kashmir is protected by the king of all Nagas Nila, whose Royal Umbrella represents the circular spring (Nila Kunda) with Vitasta oozing forth form it as its handle"[22]. However, he is silent about other sources of this river after its disappearance twice. This fact conclusively establishes that in his time only Nilanaga was taken as the source of Vitasta.

---

18. Ibid-349. 19. Kavyamala series no. 61, Bombay (1897).
20. Ibid, XII-2-34 21. Raja, edited by M. A. Stein I,16.
22. Ibid I,28.

The texts eulogising the places of piligrimages in Kashmir or even outside are called Mahatmyas. Naturally such a sacred river as Vitasta should have a Mahatamya. In this respect, only two Mahatmyas in extant form are available in the Kashmir Govt Research Library [23].

There might be other Mahatmyas on this subject; if so,they are confined to the personal libraries of the pandits. Unfortunately these two Mahatmyas are not historically dependable in as much as their antiquity and contents are disputable. The text in both with minor difference claims to narrate the Tirthas along the course of the Vitasta. At the very outset the Mahatmyas locate the source of the river as Verinaga instead of Nila Naga the established source by tradition and fully described in Nilamata and Raja Tarangini. The author has given the name of the village Veri Naga in which this spring is situated. In course of time this spring did come to be known as Verinaga but it is of comparatively recent origin. It is totally unknown in Nilamata and RajaTarangini and Harcaritacintamani, the oldest texts. First reference to this epithet "Vera" is found in Moghul times. [24]

So these Mahatmyas can roughly belong to the sixteenth or seventeeuth centruy A.D. This is corroborated by the fact that the name Saradapur or Shadipur occurs in it at the confluence of Vitasta and Sindhu.

---

23. *One allegdly taken from Bhringisa-Samhita and the other from Adipurana (Kashmira khanda).* 24. *Abul Fazal, Aini-Akbari, II, page 370.*

On the authority of Jona Raja we know that this name was given to it by Sultan Shahabudin patently a corruption from "Shahabudin pura". The aim of the author seems to bring it in line with its present name "Shadipur". [25] This pertains to the fourteenth century A.D. it is probable that the author being of recent origin had lost contact with the old tradition and pretended to write "Saradapur" etc only to announce his antiquity while he actually knew that it was called "Shadipur" in his time. Not only this, the name of the famous Moghul garden, "Shalamar" occurs in it, which was built by Empress Nur Jehan wife of Jahangir [26] Emperor of India (1605-1627). This conclusively proves that the author belongs to seventeenth century A.D. However, in spite of their comparatively recent origin, the Mahatmyas do display a thorough familiarity with the older texts and the current tradition prevailing in their time.

Both these Mahatmyas narrate at length the origin and source of this river on the lines given in the Nilamata. It has also furnished us with a lengthly list of Tirthas located on its right and left banks.

So it becomes lucidly clear that "Nilanaga" is acknowledged to be the source of Vitasta by Nilamata, Haracarita Cintamani, RajaTarangini and the Mahatmyas. We have no justification in rejecting this most ancient evidence.

However, there is one more marshy lake some three miles south of Yusmarg a tourist spot, known as Nilanaga nowadays. This is probably the source of Duda

25. *JonaRaja, Raja Tarangini, 409* 26. *Vitasta Mahatmya xxi-39.*

Ganga ancient Dugdhaganga [27] or Ksirasindhu. [28] Nilamata refers to it as 'Ksiranadi' and the Mahatamyas as SvetaGanga. This lake seems to be fed by snow and small rivulets coming down from Pir Panchal range. It is not defintely a Naga or a spring-a perennial waterbasin, but an inundatory receptacle. It has not enjoyed any significant sanctity, so the Mahatmyas are silent about it. Abul-Fazal [29] being taken in by the similarity of the names has ascribed all the legends to this lake instead of Verinag. This confusion on his part has to a large extent influenced the ancient tradition. Even though in Nilamata itself [30] two Nilanagas are mentioned, but by no stretch of imagination, the Vitasta can be taken as flowing from it. The route of the Vitasta is quite different and the waters from this lake meet it just below Srinagar. Till then there is no contact between the two.

The present Shahabad in Anantnag district was known as 'Vera' in the ancient times. Abu-l-Fazal also records this very name for this Pargana. [31] Hence it is no surprise that the spring Nilanaga came to be known as the 'spring' of vera or Verinaga also. The name of the village came to be asscciated with this spring and it could be located easily thus. Such Nagas-springs which have the name of the village or the locality in which they are situated prefixed or suffixed with them are legion in Kashmir. Abu-l-Fazal testifying to its sanctity has recorded that many temples of stone were erected near it [32]. However, these massive

27. *Bilhana-VikramankaDevacaritam XVIII-7.*
28. *Haracaritmciatmani.* 29. *Aini Akbari II, 363.*
30. *350-351.* 31. *Aini Akbari II, page 361.*
32. *Ibid pp 370.*

temples of stone are not there now, but a small[33] Shivalaya exists still there. These stones must have been used for rennovation and enlosing the spring by later kings. This fact can be easily discerned even now. Moreover, a hamlet in the close vicinity of this spring is still known as Verinag even now. It has been explicitly mentioned in Nilamata (762-66) that Vitastosava or the birth-day of Vitasta falls on the 13th of bright half of Bhadrpada or Bhadoon, known in Kashmir as " Vyetha truvah ". On this auspicious day offerings of scents, garlands, and eatables are to be made into the river itself. In Kashmiri the Vitasta is called " Vyetha" to-day.

It can easily be surmised that the small stream coming out of Nila Naga or Nila kunda could assume the form of a big river only when being fed by other streams coming in its way. So a number of streams or rivulets join it close to Anantang and the actual Vitsasta begins to take shape. The present " Bringi " stream called Bhrngi[34] in ancient times is the first to join its waters. From the northeast " Arpath " stream mentioned in Nilamata as Harsapatha[35] and from the west waters issuing from springs of Achabal (ancient Aksavala)[36] meet the waters of Vitasta at Khanbal. From the north the ancient Ledari[37] (modern Lider) also rushes down with its voluminous waters to join this confluence and the Vitaita flows down majestically to Srinagar in all her glory.

From Khanbal[38] the river becomes navigable and in ancient times this was the only dependable and pro-

33. Siva–temple.

34. Vitasta Mahatmya. 35. Nilamata. 36. Raja I, 338. In Nilamata as Aksipala naga. 37. Raja Tarangini I, 87. 38. According to a gloss in Nilamata Khanbal port corresponds to Khandapucha.

fitable means of transport[39] to and from Srinagar, and so, many important towns Tirthas and capitals came to be built on its bank. Down below Khanbal on the right bank of the Vitasta is situated the ancient Tirtha of " Vijyeshvara " modern " Vejbror. " Kalhana says that this Tirtha was built by king Ashoka (Raja I, 105). About 3 miles down below Khanbal the Vitasta is joined by 'Veshiva' (Visoka)[40] and Rembyar[41] rivers and this junction known as " Sangam " at present was in olden times called " Gambhira Sangam.[42] "Gambhira " can literally mean " deep, " since three big rivers meet at this Sangam, hence it was called "Deep" (Gambhira). Dr. Stein contends that the " Gambhira " river as mentioned at different places in Raja Tarangni is the short united course of " Vesav " and Rembyar before it meets the Vitasta[43] but no such name occurs in Nilamata in the description of rivers. In course of time the prefix " Gambhira " has dropped and only " Sangam" has remained uptodate. No ruins whatsoever of the old Tirtha are seen above ground these days. If excavations are taken up we might unearth the temples built at this site by the Guru " Mihirdatta " of king Candrapida[44] (A. D. 686–695).

Some miles below " Sangam " the Vitasta with its replenished waters flows close to the old city of Avantipur founded by king Avantivarman[45] (A. D. 855-883). Ruins of two temples built of stone are seen there now. The Srinagar Jammu National Highway passes very close to these. This town was very famous even after the

39. Raja V, 84, VII 347, 714 etc.
40. See earlier under " Sources " 41. Ancient name Ramayanatavi, Raja 1,263-65. 42. Haracaritacintamani x-102 Raja viii-1063, 1497. 43. Raja vol. II, 414, 44. Raja IV, 80. 45. Raja V-46.

death of its founder and finds mention in many chronicles including Raja Tarangini[46]. In the time of Avanti Varman the Vitasta was dredged by one Suyya and its course regulated. The scare of floods and famines looming large in the horizon every year was averted. The price of one Khari[47] of paddy would shoot upto ten hundred and fifty Dinaras.[48] After these dredging operations were completed, that very Khari would sell at 36 Dinnaras[49] only.

At a distance of five to six miles below on the " Udar " itself was located the city founded after the name of Lalitaditya.[50] Muktapida known as " Lyetpor " today. Since this town was built in the absence of the King by his architect, so he did not take kindly to it. At present no ruins of the old city are seen above ground ; only lovely saffon—fields standing on these Udars greet our eyes. While coming down from these " Udars " we see the Vitasta touch the fringe of " Padampur " called " Pampur " now-a-days[51]. This township was built by Padma brother of Jaya Devi a concubine of Lalita Pida (A. D. 900) and a temple of Visnu was also erected there. At this place the Vitasta takes a slight curve towards the right just to be quite close to Puranadhisthana (Kashmiri Pandrethan) the old capital of Kashmir built by Praversena I.[52] At this place the Buddhists and in turn Vaishnavas and Saivas constructed their places of worship, the remains of which lie scattered all over.

46. Samaya Matrika II; 76. Jonahaja 521-330, Srivara Zaina Tarangini I, 338, 42. 47. Khari-Present Kharwar,
A donkey-Load Weighing about 84 seers 48. One Dinnara equal to $\frac{1}{40}$ of a Rupee, Abul Fazal Aini Akbari 49. Raja-V. 116-117. 50. Raja IV-186 51. Raja, IV-695. 52. Raja III, 99.

Down below by three miles or less, Vitasta is joined by Mahasarit (Kashmiri Mar, Tsunt Kol)[53]. In reality it is a canal diverted from "Dal" lake, Skt (Dala), so that its superfluous water joins the Vitasta. The level of the lake is higher than the Vitasta and a water-gate has been built at the head of the canal to regulate the level of its water. It seems that in those times also, some such system of regulating its flow did exist Kalhana explicitly mentions that Praversena II built the dyke (Setu) around the Mahasarit and in an allegorical way adds that the "Rakhsa's-knee" was used to part the waters.[54]. The part of city which falls in this locality is called Suthu even to-day. Moreover, it can be inferred easily that the back waters (Mar in Kashmiri) extended upto "Khodabal" (Ksurikabala) as used by Kalhana[55]. In this virtual island was the temple of Maksika Swamin[56] known as "Mysum" nowadays. The confluence of Mahasrit (Tsunta-Kol) with the Vitasta was known as a Tirtha since very old times. Bilhana in his Vikramankadeva Caritam (xviii, 28,) says that the temple of Siva called Ksemagaurivara was built at this confluence by king Ksemagupta, (A. D. 950-958). Mankha refers to it in his 'Srikanthacaritam' as महा सरिद् वितस्तयो: संगम:[57]. While Srivara in his Zaina Tarangini gives it more recent name मारी संगम:[58]. Evidently this मारी is the modern मॉर which was a useful means of internal transport and extended up to "Narvor" (Skt Nadavana) before passing into the marshes of the "Anchar Lake."[59]

One fact comes out prominently while following the course of the Vitasta from Khanbal to the city proper,

53. Raja, III-345

54. Ibid-III-245 *55. Ibid-III-347. 56. Ibid-IV, 88 57. Ibid, III, 24*

58. I—442 *59., Raja—III, 345.*

that all the important towns and Tirthas have been built on the right bank of the river and the left bank has been ignored completely. There is a cogent reason for this, in as much as, on the right bank elevated 'udars' made these townships and Tirths flood-proof, while on the left bank the river has eaten into not very high and solid embankments and thus marshes have been formed. Such land could never be depended upon for construction purposes. This fact can be witnessed even to-day. Just before meeting Mahasarit, Vitasta enters into the precincts of the city; perhaps the temple of Shurahyar[60] at the foot of Gopadari (Takhti Suliaman, Shankara carya hill) joined the gateway to Pravarapur (Srinagar). The dykes on both sides of the river are built on solid foundations and also at a considerable height, so that a flight of steps commonly made of stone have been carved out of these for reaching the river itself. The approaches to the river are called " Ghats " and have served from a long time as the temporary bazars or "Mandis" for vegetables, fuel and other necessaries of life when the river transport was in vogue. Even to-day the food rationing Depots run by the Government are installed at these ghats and the barges carrying heavy loads of rice, flour, and even sugar are anchored there. The city of Srinagar is also located on the two banks of this river at present linked by many permanent bridges. However, in olden times particularly during the Hindu Rule permanent bridges were not built for fear of invasion or of fire. Kalhana refers to at least two bridges which were built by joining big barges.[61] He also asserts that it was Praversena II who introduced this art of boat bridges and got massaive bridges of boats built at his new capital Pravara pura.[62] The making of

60. Ibid 61. Raja—viii, 909. 1539, viii, 1182. 62. Raja III, 354.

bridges with boats was as much important from defence point of view, as from that of fighting outbreak of fire. These boats could be disengaged at a very short notice and the advancing army of the enemy could not cross over to the capital, or the blazing fire could not spread so easily.

Just a hundred yards or so below the Marivitastasangama to the left, the Vitasta is diverted into a smaller river called occasionally Ksipt Kulya[63] modern (Kuttokol). This means the rivulet (Kulya) having been taken out of Vitasta (Ksipta). 'Kut' In Kashmiri, means inferior or artificial; since this stream was not natural hence earned the name Kuta. This branch again meets its source the Vitasta beyond the seventh bridge. Just on this diversion stood the old Palaces of Dogra rulers which have since been takenover by the state Government and are used as offices known as old Secretariat. On the left bank of the river in front of these old Palaces over-looking the Mahasarita-Vistasta Sangama is a Vaishnava temple called Gadadhara temple now-adays, supposedly built by Dogra rulers. No reference to this is found in any of the chronicles on Kashmir. On this tract of land girdled by Vitasta on one side and Ksiptika on the other, a virtual island, presumably stood the Royal palaces in olden times. This island was called by the name [64] Kasthila; (Modern Kathul). This inference is strengthened by a passage in Raja Tarangini which shows that king Ananta (A. D. 1028-63) transferred his Royal residence to the vicinity of the temple of Sada Siva[65] to left bank of the river. Since imposing and massive structures of wood were used for making a

63. Ibid viii, 732 *64. Raja viii, 1169* *65. Raja viii, 186—187*

palace, so this locality came to be known as Kasthila[66] (derived from काष्ठ wood). "The evidence of buildings made of wood in Srinagar is corroborated by the huge conflgarations which overtook Srinagar frequently and at times the intensity of the fire was so great that it crossed to the other side of river also, and set it to flames[67]. Easily combustible materials as wood and birch bark used for roofing could only workout such havoc. There is a Siva temple in this locality also presently known as Kathalisvara; Sada Siva temple as alluded to above may be this Dr. Stein has tried to identify this with modern " Purushyar " just below Kutkol[68]. However the shrine of Siva built there on the Ghat is of recent origin and built by public munificence, whereas the temple at Kathul does bear patent marks of antiquity. Moreover, Kalhana writes that this shrine of Sada Siva was[69] in front of Soma Tirtha on the right bank of Vitasta[70]. This Soma Tirtha is definitely the present Kashmiri " Somyar " shrine just close to the second bridge. Both the shrines on the left bank viz Kathlesvara and Purusyar can claim this privilege though not exactly in front but a bit removed from right downstream and upstream respectively. The elevation of Kathul or the Zaindar Mohalla as it is called now, is also comparatively higher than the rest of the city; perhaps it shows that this island between Ksiptika (Kutkol) and Vitasta was intentionally raised to protect the Royal palaces from the ravaging waters of these rivers when in fury, as also furnishing it with a vantage position when attacked.

66. In its feminine form it also means a plantain tree (Apte's Skt Eng Dictionary 67. Raja viii, 1169—1180. 68. Introduction to Raja Vol. I 69. Raja V, 41. 70. Ibid, 3360.

After this, the Vitasta flows at a much slower pace upto the weir where a lock has been built to control the level of water in the city. Many more Tirthas and other buildings must have been located on its banks, but no reference can be found for these, nor any ruins sighted. However, between the 6th and 7th bridge just near the weir to the right Queen Didda (A.D. 980-1003) built the " Didda Matha" called "Dedmar" now-a-days [71]. Srivara also refers to this part of the city frequently in his chronicle. [72] Just in front of the "Didda Matha" on the left bank ksiptika joins Vitasta again having parted with it earlier near the "Gadadhar temple [73]. However, before we follow the course of Vitasta beyond the weir, it will be pertinent to remove the misnomer that "baths" and hot-water baths (Hamams) were unknown in Kashmir before the Muslim rule. Kalhana [74] has preserved for us copious references regarding "Snanagrhas" ' Majjaanavasa" "Snanakosthas" etc in his chronicle. These may be translated as "river baths" and "bathing cells". Presumably the first two were used by male Population and the "Kosthas" individual cells were reserved for ladies. These were built of wood and could be shifted from one Ghat to another. At the time of the "great fire" even these were devoured by the raging flames [75]. The corruption from "Snankoshta as "Srankuth" is even used to-day in the same context. Ksemendra [76] mentions such baths in his Samaya Matrika much before Kalhana.

Just below the weir one glaring difference becomes patently visible. The right bank of Vitasta changes

71. Raja VI. 300, 72. ZainaTarangini I, 173,186 IV, 156.
73. See earlier, 74. Raja VIII, 707, 1182,2423 etc.
75. Raja VIII-11850 76. II,38.

into marshes being very low and the left bank is considerably higher; within the city both these banks command the same height for understandable reasons as the city is situated on both of these. Some furlongs below from the left bank "Dudganga" [77]joins the Vistata. At this confluence as at every Sangama a Tirtha is essentially located. Bilhana cleary alludes to it.[78] The most renowned Sangama is, however located some distance below towards the right when the Sindhu the greatest tributary of the Vitasta meets it at Prayaga.

The "Sinhdu" comes down from Gangabal lake and enters the Plain at Dugdhasrama [79] Kashmiri "Dodarhom." The name Uttara Manasa is the name given to this lake by the ancient chroniclers, Kalhana (RajaI-57), HaracaritaCintanmai (Iv–87) and Nilamata (610,970); Haramukuta Ganga Mahatyma also testifies to it. The valley of Sindhu is the modern district of Lar the old "Lahara". [80] At Dodurhom all the various branches of this river meet and also form a veritable river which wending its way towards the west, it reaches the Vitasta quite opposite to the village Shadipur. The "Sinhdu" can also mean an ordinary river in Skt, yet "Sindhu" in Kashmir has been equated with "Ganga" in its sanctity and importance. Nilamata, Harcarita Cintamani and Mahatmyas have repeatedly referred to it. Nilamata identifies the Vitasta with the Yamuna and theSindhu with Ganga the two most famous and holiest rivers of India. Hence their confluence has also been called Prayaga गंगा

77. *See earlier for Dudaganga.*
78. *Vikram-XVIII,22.*
79. *Srivara, Zaina Tarangini IV-110,136,593.*
80. *Raja-V-51.*

सिन्धुस्तु विज्ञेया वितस्ता यमुना तथा (Nila-vv 297). It is held in great esteem and respect by the devouts since very ancient times. However, on the evidence of Kalhana we have [81] to believe that the present position of Sangama is not so very ancient. This confluence was artificially engineered by "Suyya" while busy in dredging operations for desilting the Vitasta. This was done under the orders of king Avanti Varman (A.D. 855-883). He further says that at the former confluence the two temples of VishnuSvamin and VainyaSvamin were situated close to Phalapora and Parihasapura, Kashmiri (Paraspura), and the confluence which Suyya contrived near Sundaribhavana the temple of HrsikesaYogasvamin was erected as it was the deity of worship इष्टदेव of Suyya. [82]

On the authority of Kalhana himself we know that Parihasapur and Phalapura were the two cities founded by Lalitaditya Muktapida (A.D. 750); we have to assume for relying upon this evidence that the Vitasta at that time flowed near these two cities just below the Uddars on which these are situated and the Sindhu met it there, "The plateau situated with heaps of ruins of which few have been excavated. Barring Buddhist monuments there are purely Hindu structures also visible there." [83] Pt. R.C.Kak has to say further, " crossing the ravine in which nestles the little village of Diwar Yakmanpura and ascending the plateau opposite are seen the immense ruins

81 *Raja, V-97-98.*

82. *Ibid, V-99-100.*

83. *R.C. kak, Ancient Monuments of Kashmir.*

of two extraordinary large temples; one of them has a peristyle larger than that of the Martanda"[84]. This ravine may be the dry bed of the Vitasta now as it flowed, then before its course was changed and harnessed by Suyya and the two temples alluded to above may be temples of VisnuSvamin and Vainaysvamin built on these heights. At present at this confluence a small Shivalaya is situated and in mid-stream some distance from the bank, a pedestal of stones is constructed on which a cinar trees has grown. Kalhaṅa specifically mentions that the tree was Vata (fig) and not cinar. It may be concluded that the fig tree could not catch up with the climate of Kashmir and in course of time it withered and in its place the local tree of benign majesty cinar was transplanted in its place,as figs are not grown at all in Kashmir. There is also a belief amongst the Hindus here that this cinar has remained stationary in size since it was planted. Some miles below the confluence, the village of Sumbal coms next. This village is now situated on both banks of the river joined by a bridge. However, in those times when the Vitasta was flowing towards the left, the ancient capital of Kashmir Jayapura[85] is situated. The town was founded by king Jayapida in the second half of the eight century.[86]

Somewhat below the present bridge to the left stands the shrine of Nandikesvara alluded to as Nandi Kesava.[87] close to it a channel from the river goes

84. Ancient Monuments of Kashmir,page 149. 85. RajaTarangini IV-506, It has been identified with present "Anderkootha(AbhyantaraKota) the inner court of that time as used by Kalhana, Srivara and other later chrcniclers. The palace had also an cuter court. 86. Ibid iv-509. 87. Ibid. V,245.

towards Manas (Saras) lake, now known as Manasbal. This lake is mentioned in Nilamata and Raja Tarangini by Jonaraja[88]

A short distance lower, the Vitasta glides its way through the Wular. This very big lake is named as Mahapadmasaras founded by Maha Padama Naga who is believed to dwell in it as its presiding deity. Nilamata and other older texts relate this fact at length.[89] The name Wular given to this lake now-adays is obviously derived from "Ullola" occurring in Jonaraja's RajaTarangini.[90]. In Srikanthacaritam Mahapadama has been equated with "Ullola" by its commenatatator Jona Raja[91]. Many myths and legends seem to have been woven around this lake in which it has been mentioned that this lake was a very thickly populated town named Candrapura, and through the curse of sage Durvasa was submerged under water.

Many other legends bring in the name of king Visvagasva and a Dravidian magician[92]. From the north Via the town of Bandipura, Madhumati stream joins the lake. This stream is mentioned in Nilamata also for its sanctity.[93] However, one thing remains patently clear that the Vitasta while passing through the lake does not altogether lose its identity. Very cautiously it follows the rule of keeping to the left of the lake and a string of water is easily discernible in that vast expanse as that of the Vitasta.

---

88. Nilamata, 1338.Raja(JonaRaja) 864.

89. Nilamata-958. Raja,V.68,Jona Raja 909-944. 90. Jona Raja(Bombay edition) 1227,90. 91. III-9.

92. Nilamata 976-1008-Raja iv,592. 93. Nilamata-1259,Raja Vii,1179, viii, 2883.

After wading through the waters of the lake, the Vitasta regains her own original stature nearabout Suyyapur modern Sopore. This town now a very flourishing centre of fruit-growing is a standing monument to the engineering acumen of Suyya who regulated the course of Vitasta in the time of Avanti Varman [94]. This town was founded by the Annapati himself [95] on the reclaimed land after desilting Vitasta. [96] Three miles below Sopore the Vitasta is joined by "Pohur" stream from the right at Doabgah. This name does not appear either in Nilamata or Raja Tarangini when its two tributaries "Mavar" and "Hamli" are distinctly mentioned in Nilamata and Raja Tarangini as [97] Mahuri and Samala respectively; However Jona Raja has referred to it as "Pahra". [98].

Some miles downstream the Vitasta enters the Varahaksetra, and the principal town of this Ksetra is known as Varahamula [99] Baramulla of to-day. The name is evidently derived from the ancient Tirtha of VishnuAdiVaraha near the site of the present Kotitirtha very close to the river bank. This shrine was destroyed by Sikandar Butshikan to which Jona Raja refers explicitly. [100] The town was located on the right bank of the river in those times. It has now spread over extensively to the

94. Raja iv.715(A.D 855-883). 95. An appellation for Suyya; Literally the master of foodstuffs, who made the cereals very cheap by regulating the course of Vitasta and saving the country from floods. 96 Raja V,118. 97. Nilamata, 1309.
98. JonaRaja (Bombay Edition) 1227-1230.
99. Ibid III,9. 100. Ibid.

left also eating into the Karewas adjacent to it. In those times a bridge also existed over the Vitasta for come and go from right to left and vice versa [101]. This town also was important from strategic point of view, hence a "Drang [102] watch-tower was also constructed over there.

Even to-day where the Vitasta narrows down and flows over large boulders which is referred to as "Dvara" by Kalhana [103], the name of the locality is persistently known as "Drang". However, to the left of the bank Turuska king "Huska" built his capital Huskapura [104] which has survived as "Ushkor" nowadays. It seems that "Huskpura" was more important than the "Varahamulla" in olden times. Kalhana refers to it frequently and kings other than the Indo-Scythian "Huska" also embellished it from time to time. Lalitaditya [105] built a great temple of Vishnu and a Buddhist Vihara there. Ksemagupta spent his last days at the two maths he had founded at Huskapura. [106]

Kaniska the famous Kushan ruler also founded a city "Kaniskapura" (Now Kanispura) to the left of Vitasta some furlongs above "Ushkhr [107]. Understandably there was much space available for the extension of the city on the left bank rather than on right where it is closely girdled by hills; since the route to "Sarada" also lay through Varahamulla, this town was more of a stopover station than the actual city and consequently was founded on the right bank. Some distance above the gorge in which

101,Raja-IV,592. 102. Ibid VII,1179. VIII,2883.
103. Raja I,122. 104. Raja I,169. 105- RajaIV,188. 106. Raja VI,186. 107. RajaI,198.

the Vitasta goes down and rises up again as a river by its own right in the west Pakistan under the name of Jhelum, "Indradvadasi" festival used to be celebrated in ancient times. On this day presents and clothes were given away to the poor.[108] This day is still observed in Kashmir under the same name "Inderbah" on the 12th of the bright half of Bhadrapada but with a difference. It used to be a day of festivities and gaiety, but now this day has been reserved for manes. Shrada is being performed there on the spot which is known as "Kanimaja" Kashmiri, Kaniyasi-Mata in Sanskrit. The name as such does not occur in any ancient text even though Indradvadasi is mentioned in the Nilamata.[109] The place has been called as Varahaksetra in general.

The boons accruing from this river are so many that it can be called a veritable Mother; but at this place it becomes smaller in expanse and volume, so it may have been called a smaller Mother. It might be even derived from कन्[110] verb meaning to lessen or to reduce in size.

After emerging from the emerald hued spring of Nila at Verinaga, we have followed the course of the Vitasta from Khanbal to Khadanyar. This Khadanyar can be traced from Khadana Vihar built by one of the queens 'Khadana' of king Meghavahana.[111] The Vitasta Mahatmya (xix, 60) refers to this locality as Khadanahara. This journey of eighty miles

108. RajaVIII,495. 109. Nilamata 792, but called Mahadvadasi.
110. 'Kan' to diminish, Apte, Skt English dictionary.
III. Raja III, 14.

and odd of this zig-zag river conceals in its bosom the variegated cultural and religious values of the valley. These miles definitely represent the milestones stretching over thousands of years for recording its inflow and outflow; virtue and evil, rise and fall, joys and sorrows of the Kashmiris at large. So it does not seem any exaggeration when Vaisampayana says to Janmejaya:

पृथिव्यां यानि तीर्थानि तानि तत्र नराधिप । [112].

"O king, whatever Tirthas exist on this globe are found there (in Kashmir)."

And to elucidate his point he adds:

तत्र नागा ह्रदा पुण्यास्त्र पुण्या शिलोच्चयाः ।
तत्र नद्यस्तथा पुण्या पुण्यान्यपि सरांसि च ।
देवालयाः सुपुण्याश्च तेषां चैव तथाश्रमाः ।।
तन्मध्येन च निर्याता सीमन्तमीव कुर्वती ।
वितस्ता परमा देवी साक्षाद्हिमनगोद्भवा ।। [113]

"There (in Kashmir) the springs, ponds and Mountains bestow virtue. There the rivers and streams are very sacred; the shrines are immensely sanctified and likewise the hermitages also. In the midst of which the great goddess Vitasta born actually of the Himalayas has sprung up dividing it (Kashmir) like the parting-line of a lady's hair."

112, Nilamata-35
113. Nilamata, 43-45

"Panchastavi-" A Brief Study.

I. Prologue : –

THE compound word[1] 'Panchastavi' in ordinary parlance connotes a collection of devotional hymns divided into five cantos. The very first verse of the first canto makes it abundantly clear that these panegyrics are essentially meant for the 'Rainbow-hued' Divine Energy comprising the 'speech' (वाक्) and 'resplendence of symbols' (ज्योति); Moreover the whole gamut of Alphabet from AA (अ) to Ksa (क्ष) is presided over by this Transcendental[2] Energy; and to speak squarely, it is the progenitor of the sound and sense. At times[3] it has been equated with super-knowledge (पराविद्या), bliss (आनन्द) and even this whole cosmic world. Moreover,[4] this 'super-marvel' Maha-maya (महामाया) creates and annihilates this world of sound and sense by the triple formula of desire (इच्छा), perception (ज्ञान) and action (क्रिया)[5]. However it is also to be conceded that this poetic work is essentially an allegory in which the mental experience of supreme consciousness (परासंवित) has been clothed in the flesh and blood of words to make it appear as physical or concrete. The poet has very candidly referred to this approach in the fifth canto (6th verse); So the 'Benign Motherhood' of that 'Primeval Energy' आदिशक्तिः has become

1. *Panchanam Stvanam Samaharah collection of five Panegyrics or eulogiums.*
2. *Para-Shakti-c.f. Panchastavi-I, 15.*
3. *c.f. Panchastavi- Ibid.*
4. *c.f. Panchastavi-IV,31.*
5. *Panchastavi-III,6.*

the focal point throughout the pages of this devotional composition.

II. Title of the composition :—

But this word five (पञ्च) pancha or the original panchan (पंचन्) has many other shades of meaning, moreso with the Saiva phillosphers, which naturally must have weighed with the poet while giving a name to his composition. So, it will not be out of place here to allude to those shades contained in the number five, so as to comprehend exactly as to what the poet wants to express by its use. Perhaps this contention presupposes that the devotee-poet has deliberately confined his imagination to five cantos (stavas स्तव:) only, so as to make it synchronize with other shades of meaning contained in this number.

In 'TantraSadbhava' [6] - a Shaivistic treatise, the Divine Energy has been described as five-fold, panch-mantra gata(पंचमंत्रगता) and also Panch-vidha (पञ्च विधा) having five forms. Herein clear reference has been made to the five modes of reciting a Mantra or an incantation with syllabic instants (Kala कला). These are Ishana (ईशान) with five [7] instants, Tatpurusha (तत्पुरुष) with four. Aghora (अघोर) with eight; Vamadeva(वामदेव) with thirteen and Sadyojata(सद्योजात) also with eight respectively, making a total of thirty eight, which works out to be the exact number of consonants in the Alphabet. (अस्वरा:)

The school of cognition (प्रत्यभिज्ञा)[8] in the shaiva-lore takes five as the synonym of five duties (पंचकृत्यानि) which are Abhasan (आभासन) appearance, rakti (रक्ति)

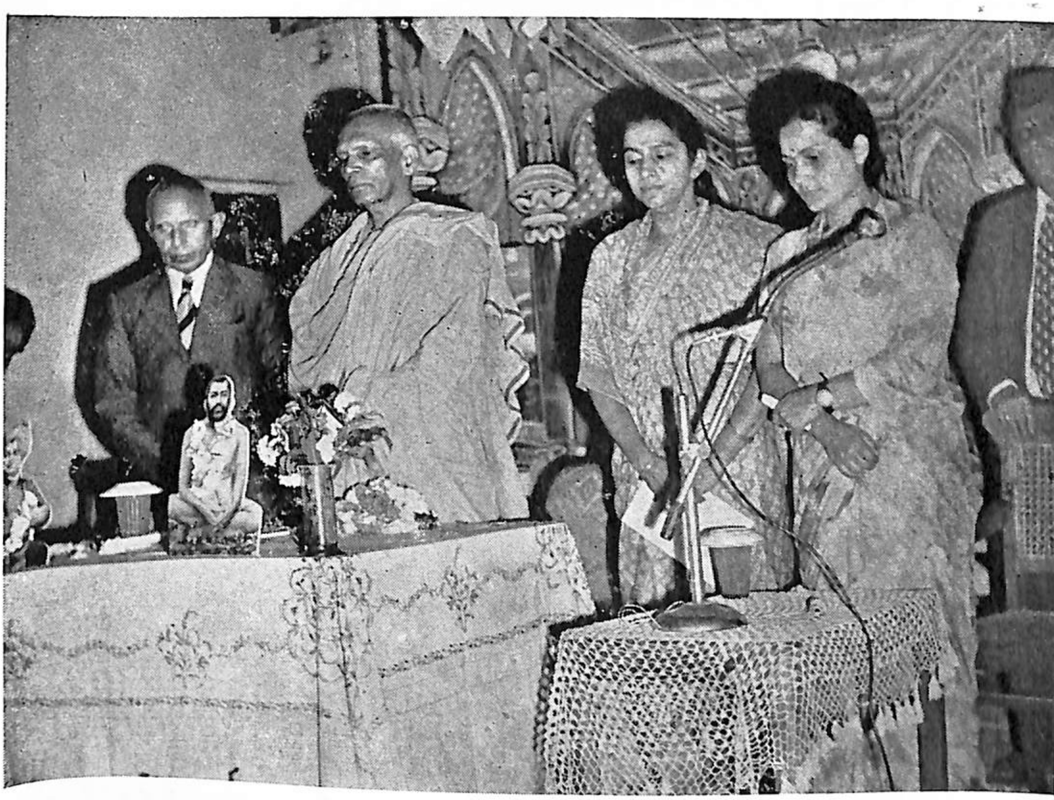
6. *Quoted by Kshemaraja in his commenary on 'ShivaSutra,' Page 45.*
7. *The use of 'five' in the very first mode also deserves consideration.*
8 *PratyabhijnaHradaya-Sutra X.*

attachhment, Vimarshan (विमर्शन) scrutiny, Bija (बीज) source, and avasthapanam (अवस्थापनम) establishing. These five duties or the stages of perception are also an inextricable part of the muttering of an incantation (जपविधि) Japa-vidhi; hence the reference to mantroddharah (मन्त्रोद्धारः) delivering an incantation [9] is not without purpose in Panchastavi.

Moreover, this pentad of devotional poems is essentially a treatise on Para-vidya (परा विद्या) super knowledge, as conceived by the Shaivas[10]. Naturally to spell out its contrast with the negation of knowledge avidya (अविद्या) -Ignorance, the poet must have made its five-fold division in his mind. This [11] ignorance comprises tamah (तमः) - error-,Moha (मोहः) - illusion-,Maha-mohah महामोहः - obduration-, tamisrah (तामिस्रः)-fallacy, and andha (अन्धः-mental blindness;[12] copious references throughout the text of Panchastavi for dispelling tamah (तमः) - error moha (मोह)-illusion etc have been made in this context. [13] Consequently these concomitants of ignorance are to be crossed, so that Super knowledge may dawn which is also called Shuddha Vidya (शुद्ध विद्या) or sad-vidya) सद् विद्या) by the Shaivas, which can be attained by adopting the course prescribed in Shuddhadhvan (शुद्धाध्वन्) -the pure path [14]. The Shaivas also believe that the purusha (पुरुष)-the limited individual self has five envelopments (कञ्चुक) of niyati (नियति) -confinement, Kalah (कालः) -experience of changes in time, Ragah (रागः)-attachment, Vidya(विद्या)-limited knowledge and Kala (कला)-limited authorship. The cumulative effect of these aberrations[15]

9. *Panchastavi-I. 20.*
10. *Panchastavi-IV,31.* 11. *Ibid-V,35.*
12. *Visnu Purana.* 13. *Panchastavi-I,17;II,5,28,V-I. etc.*
14. *Abhinava Gupta in Tantraloka-VI-56.*
15. *Vritti (Commentary) on Ishvara Pratyabhijna,III,i,90.*

(**National Anthem being Sung**).



L. to R.

Hon'ble M. K. Ticku Minister for Forests (Jammu and Kashmir State), Swami Ranganathananda Ji the world famous Scholar, Shrimati Mekhala Jha and Dr. Vimla Dhar President Sharada Peetha Trust. The I Series was Presented by our President to these dignitaries at a social gathering in our School on 10-6-'76.

produces Maya (obduration) and this can be removed completely by Shuddha vidya(शुद्ध विद्या), the pure knowledge as alluded to above. Actually Maya (माया) obduration, is the name given to non-identity between Shiva and Shakti.[16] So the poet invokes the 'Immanent Mother' (सकलजननी) SakalaJanani–to emancipate all the living beings from this 'knot of Maya[17].

As a corollary to this, having overcome Maya (obduration) the experiencer has to traverse five stages of sad-vidya(सद् विद्या), assimilative consciousness (ऐश्वर्य:) (Aishvarya) All pervasive conscious-self, सदाख्या (Sadakhya), objective conscious self, शक्तितत्व:(Shakti tattva) predicative manifestation, and शिवतत्त्व (Shiva-tattva) subjective conscious-self, so as to identify himself with the Parama Shiva (Supreme conscious-self), the acme of Shaiva realization [18]. The Panchastavi-kara (the composer of Panchastavi) has referred to these in very unambiguous terms also.[19]

In addition to these shades of meaning projecting from five (पंचन्), it cannot be gainsaid that it does not connote the body made up of five elements (पंचमहाभूत or पञ्चतत्त्व) namely Prithvi पृथ्वी, (solidity). Apas (आपस) liquidity, Agni अग्नि (formativity). Vayu वायु (aeriality) and akasha आकाश (etheriality) [20]. The recitation of an incantation is definitely a mental drill with physiological basis; so the body-the very first expedient for accomplishing Dharma- [21] is an inevitable part of this mental discipline. Hence the poet is at pains to refer to this Vehicle in his eulogies to the Supreme

16. *Tantraloka* 17. *Panchastavi-V-1.*
18. *Tantraloka-V,48.* 19. *Panchastavi-III,9.*
20. *Engush equivalents adopted from J. C. Chatterji's 'Kashmir Shaivism,' page 147.*
21. *Shariram adyam khalu dharama sadhanam* शरीरमाद्यं खलु धर्मसाधनम् ।

Energy.[22]

Not only this, in several Tantric works[23], human body is looked upon as Shri Chakra (disc of bountiful Superhuman power) in which the microcosmic angles of the Energy (Shakti) have been detailed as tvak त्वक् (Skin), asrah अस्र: (blood) mamsam मांस (flesh), Meda मदा (lymph) and asthi अस्थि (bones). The macrocosmic angles have also been defined as the five elements, five tanmatras (subtle elements) belonging to Shabda शब्द (sound), sparsha स्पर्श (touch), rupa रूप (colour), rasa रस: (flavour), and गंध (gandha) smell, five senses of perception (ज्ञानेन्द्रियाणि) five senses of action (कर्मेन्द्रियाणि) and five pranas.[24] This aspect of Shakti (Energy) has been fully brought out not only by Panchastavi,[25] but also by another compilation of panegyrics named Saundarya Lahri सौन्दर्य लहरी (the wave of Beautitude)[26] even. Again the five karnas कारण (generative causes) in Shaiva philosophy are Brahma ब्रह्मा (the progenitor), Vishnu विष्णु (the nourisher), Rudra रुद्र (the annihilator), Sada-Shiva सदाशिव (perennial & immanent conscious spirit) and Ishvara ईश्वर: (the supreme Lord). To this belief the poet has succinctly referred in these eulogisms[27].

Last but not the least, the Shiva (शिव:) from which the Shaivism derives its name, is supposed to have five faces (पंचमुख) Panch-mukha, but it is just a corpse (शव:) Shavah, without the union with

22. *Panchastavi IV—26 V,—26*

23. *Kamika Tantra (Mantra Shastra)*

24. *Pran* (प्राण) *Apan* (अपान) *Saman* (समान), *Vyan* (व्यान) *and Udan* (उदान) ।

25. *II—17. III—5. and V—15 and 20.*

26. *11th. Verse.*

27. *Panchastavi iv-26.*

Energy (Shakti) शक्ति[28]. This very thought has been expressed by the author in dexterously fine poetry.[29]. The Saundarya Lahri begins the devotional praise of the Super-Enargy with this belief.[30]

So it has been made abundantly clear that the poet, who composed Panchastavi was an ardent Shaiva and had all these shades of five in his mind, when he deliberately selected this very number, so pregnant with esoteric content, for choosing an apt and befitting title for his imagination concentrated in Panchastavi. It could not have been a mere accident or even a happy coincidence; it was wilfully done by him as a conscious artist and a versatile Shaiva.

In tune with the arguments advanced above, it also seems plausible to assert that Shaivism in essence advocates a happy compromise between materiality (भोग) bhoga and spirituality (योग) Yoga,[31] a rewarding attitude to life, and if that balance is tilted in favour of any of the two, that attitude will get disturbed and may not contribute to the well-being of the humanity at large; so when vamacharah वामाचारः [32] (the left hand ritual of the Tantras) pleaded for the introduction of pancha makara पंचमकार[33] (five Ms); naturally as a healthy reaction to this degenerate Tantric ritual which ran counter to the Shaiva teachings, the poet thought it

28 *Vamakeshvara Tantra iv- 7. Devi Bhagvata. Shiva Drishti 111—2 and 3.*

29. *Panchastavi iv—7 & 9, v—29 & 35.*

30. *Shivah shaktya yukto etc.* शिवः शक्त्या युक्तो *1st verse.*

31. *Shiva-sutra-1-18* 32. *Also called Kaulacharah* कौलाचार

33. *Mamsa, matsya, madira, maithun, mudra* मांस, मत्स्य, मदिरा, मैथुन & मुद्रा।

fit to substitute the five eulogiums for five Ms. This conjecture is substantiated by the dig in undertones he has dealt at such believers in his own composition.[34] The use of the words aparey अपरे and budhah बुधा: are significant here. Budhah बुधा: (the wise, enlightened) call this super-Energy as transcendental (अकुलम) akulam; in contrast with this aparey अपरे (others), not enlightened or wise) call Her कौलम Kaulam personifying (कौलाचार Kaulacharah.

III Nomenclature of cantos :—

Furthermore, the poet has captioned each canto with a sub-title. Herein also these subtitles have been used not haphazardly but with a purpose.

First Canto : The first canto bears the sub-title Laghu (insignificant or light). In the penultimate verse[35] of this chapter, the poet has justified the use of this word and hinted at his insignificance (लघुस्तवात्मनि) laghustvatmani for undertaking such a lofty yet burdensome task for analysing the super-Energy. However, also, it seems that he has tried to play on the word 'Laghu' and in keeping with the Shaivistic tradition tried to keep it occult रहस्य: संप्रदाय rahasya sampradayah[36]. As the word under discussion has many other meanings also, we have to glean any such out of these, which is in consonance with what has been described in this canto.

Without mincing words, it may be said that this canto tries to define, explain and emphasize the purport contained in the aphorism ' Vidya shariratta mantra rahsyam (विद्याशरीरसत्तामंत्र रहस्यम्),"[37] " The occult power of

34, *Panchastavi, V-10.* 35. *1 - 21.*

36. *Kshemraja in his commentary on Shiva Sutra page 2.*

37. *Shiva Sutra, II-3.*

an incantation is its efficacy to strike identity between the sound and its symbol." Vidya विद्या has been described as nothing other than the symbols (matrika मातृका) of the alphabet.[38] Hence the origin of letters and their method of grouping into an incantation and the consequent mode of recitation has been fully dealt with in this canto.[39] This very knowledge of letters has been treated as a fond Mother[40] granting each and every boon to her children.[41] These sounds and symbols (nada, Bindu नाद बिन्दु) emanate from the Muladhara where these are coiled together like a Kundalini – the coiled serpent and traversing twelve stations (dwadash-dalam द्वादश दलम्) approaches the Brahma-randra and then its return or descent into the Kanda or Muladhara begins and it again lies dormant there.[42] The poet, while describing this terse and yet intricate discipline of the breath is alive to the fact that it may not be taken kindly to by the prospective realizers; they might feel diffident to practise this course which seemingly appears गुरु guru (weighty, difficult); hence to make it popular and banish all the scare from the minds of the devotees, he has captioned this chapter as लघु Laghu (very light, easy to comprehend). Some say that it is the composition of a devotee named Laghu Bhattaraka लघु भट्टारक:, hence the sub-title Laghustava लघुस्तव will mean a panegyric composed by Laghu लघु, a diminutive from Laghu Bhattaraka.[43]

---

38. नं विद्या मातृकाऽपरा।

39. *c.f. 19th & 20th verse* 40. *Matrika also means a fond Mother.*

41. *Punchastavi 1—5, 9, 11 etc.*

42. *Panchastavi I—2, 11, 18. For further detail refer to Somananda's Shakta Vijnana.*

43. *'Laghustuti' published by T. Ganpati Shastri in Trivandram Sanskrit series—1917 A. D.*

Second Canto : The second canto is known as charchastava चर्चास्तव: (the panegyric containing careful study or reflection). Herein the attributies of the Divine Mother (Energy) in cosmic form have been fully described.[44] She is also invoked to cut the shackles of birth and rebirth, and to release the devotee from the prison (bondage) of his body[45] . This canto gives in detail the विश्वमय immanent form of the super-Energy, whereas the first brought into bold relief Her Vishvotteerna विश्वोत्तीर्ण transcendental form.

Third Canto : The third canto bears the title घटस्तव: gatastavah. Gatah घट: is patently derived from Ghat घट् verb meaning to unite, to join or bring together. Herein the ghatnam घटनं or sanghatnam संघटनं (union) of Shiva and Shakti is complete. The impersonal as described in the first and the personal in the second cantos respectively get fully immersed in each other in this canto just like the water and its container (Ghatah घट:). This coincides with the paraparadasha परापर दशा[46] or bhedabheda vimarshanatmakta भेदाभेद विमर्शनात्मकता[47] (complete identity) for which sadvidya सद्विद्या (the perennial and pure knowledge) is also a synonym. Hence the third canto deals with this aspect of knowledge. The Ghatah घट: (pitcher) is looked upon as the body metaphysically by the Yogis and the water inside it is taken to be the soul (Atman आत्मन्); The body of the alphabet (Vidyasharira विद्याशरीर) has been profusely mentioned in the first Canto, the second locates its soul and the third marks their

44. II—11, 12, 18. *45. Ibid—24.*

46. As propounded by Utpala in his Ishvara pratyabhijna III. 1 to 5.

47. Vide svachhanda Tantra IV—95.

auspicious blending, hence the use of the word ghatah घट: or the verb ghat घट्. So the poet jeers at those fools who torment their body with various kinds of pennance, or make themselves paupers by spending lavishly on Yajnas (sacrificial fires) and liberal remunerations.[48] The realizer attaining this stage has not to bother himself with these fruitless rituals. This very union between the sound and the symbol, para (higher) and apara (lower), the immanent and the transcendental. Shiva and the Shakti. Bheda (duality) and abheda (identity) has been very beautifully alluded to by the poet while addressing the Supreme Energy as 'Shabda Brahmamayi'[49].

4th Canto :– The fourth canto is called Amba Stavah अम्बास्तव: a panegyric eulogizing the Mother. The word Amba अम्बा is to be read in the context of ज्येष्ठा Jyeshtha and रौद्री Raudri. While discussing the origin of letters, the 'Tantra Sadbhava' has to say that रौद्री Raudri the terrible, on account of the agitation it produces, is the first stage of a letter being conceived. Jyeshtha-'the elderly or prominent' indicates its form being taken, and अम्बा Amba is the final sound which comes at the tip of the tongue.[50] Hence it is established beyond doubt that embryonic and formative stages of a letter having been described at length in the previous chapters, the fullfledged word having taken shape and being pronounced singly or as a part of an incantation is actually the Amba अम्बा. This word also means a mother like matrika, मातृका,[51] hence may also mean vidya विद्या Super–knowledge as

48. III—18. *49. Ibid—20.*

50. As quoted by Kshemraja in his commentary on Shiva Sutras, pages 51-54.

51. See note 30 earlier.

corroborated by the poet himself in the very first verse of this chapter[52]. Herein, consequently the praises of Vidya विद्या have been sung which has been naturally equated with Shakti शक्ति (energy) without which Shiva is a non-entity (asamartha) असमर्थ[53]. So, this Amba (Mother) is the real generative power in nature or man; bereft of Her, this world would look desolate. Moreover, only when Her two lotus - feet are enshrined in the of hearts people, the puzzling din and strife of obstinacy, argument and counter-argument will cease[54]. In the last verse the poet prepares the ground for captioning the penultimate chapter as 'sakala janani stava' सकलजननीस्तव : by invoking Her as as sakala bhuvana mata सकल भुवन माता[55] (Mother of all the worlds – inanimate or animate) with Her protruding breasts ebbing with the milk of human kindness[56].

Fifth Canto :- Sakala सकल (entire or whole) can be expounded in more than one way. It may mean, along with other parts, digits or full, such as sakalaindu सकलेंदु (the full moon). It might also connote in the language of Shaivas as savyenjan सव्यञ्जन् (with consonants) as against nishkala (avyenjan अव्यञ्जन्) without consonants[57] one of the methods of Japa जप: muttering an incantation[58]. It might also indicate the medial sounds or letters of the incantation with sakala japa vidhih सकल जप विधि: the method of muttering with consonants ह स क ल र

52. *Vidyeti yam shruti rahasyavido vadanti* विद्येति या श्रुतिरहस्यविदो वदन्ति
53. *IV—20 & 21.* 54. *Ibid—27.*
55. *It may also mean the 12 stages (all stages) through which Kundalini passes; or letters the sound of which passes from conception to final pronounciation.*
56. *Ibid—32.* 57. *Rudriyamala Tantra.*
58. *Panchastavi 1—6.*

डीं [59]. The latter part of the compound Janani जननी (compassionate Mother) makes it more clear and all the same unambiguous. Actually this chapter is devoted to the propitiation of the 'Universal Mother'[60] Jagatmata जगन्माता ; and this Universal Mother is maha vidya महा विद्या Super knowledge[61] being beyond speech and argument[62]. This all-pervading Mother represents in Her ownself attributes of creation, sustenance and annihilation, as also the over-lordship and the super-knowledge, thereby exhibiting diversity out of unity[63]. She showers supreme bliss on those who take pains to know Her in essence[64]

Precise import of Tripurasundari :-

Before proceeding further it seems pertinent to explain the content of Tripura त्रिपुरा or Tripura Sundari त्रिपुर सुन्दरी personifying the 'Divine Energy' and repeatedly used by the poet in all the cantos.

त्रि (tri) denotes number three and pura पुर means among other things, the body also. The word thus literally will indicate any such woman who has three bodies (tripura त्रिपुरा) or who represents in herself the beauty of three worlds (whole cosmos) त्रिपुर सुन्दरी. Perhaps to facilitate the exact comprehension of this word, the poet, on his own, has advanced reasons for calling this 'Divine Energy' as Tripura[65]. After enumerating the triple form of gods (Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra), fire (household, sacrificial and of pyre), energies (desire,

59. *Kularnava Tantra XV. 45—61.*

60. *Panchastavi V—1.*

61. महा विद्या जगन्माता *Bhavani Sahasra nama—Rudriyamala Tantra.*

62. *Panchastavi V, 2 & 4.* 63. *Ibid—23, 33 & 38.*

64. *Ibid-34.* 65. *Panchastavi—I—16.*

perception and action), basic vowels (as अ इ उ). worlds (Bhur, Bhuvah and Svah), Vedas (Rig, Yajus and sama) and other cosmic manifestions, he very convincingly tries to establish that this threefold division is actually an extension of the essence of the Divine Energy, consequently called Tripura. Shaivistic lore confirms this view of the poet, 'Prapanchasara' asserts that 'Ambika' is named as Tripura[66] because of its accent on the three basic vowels (अ इ उ) 'Tripurarnava' lays down that the Energy residing in 'Sushumna, pingala and Ida'–Blood Vessels–as also in the mind, intellect and soul, is called Tripura. 'Kalika Purana' says since everything is threefold, so she (Divine Energy) is called Tripura, त्रिपुरा. 'Vamakeshvara Tantra' believes that Tripura is threefold in the form of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, and also personifies in Herself the three powers of desire, perception and action.[67] 'Varaha Purana' also explains the name on these very lines. Hence the word Tripura is actually the manifestation of triple power of the super-Energy-Raudri रौद्री Jyeshtha ज्येष्ठा and अम्बा Amba–the birth of a letter from the embryo to the actual pronounciation.[68] Letter is an indissoluble part of an incantation, hence the poet feels that Tripura Sundari on being discerned by physical eyes or through mastering a Mantra (mentally) dispells sins and mitigates the fear of death.[69]

Hindu genius has all along provided form (Vyakt व्यक्त) to the formless (Avyakta, अव्यक्त), not because it believes that 'Divine Energy' can have any form, but with the sole motive of making that abstract Entity look like a concrete object, especially in human form,

66. *IX—2.*

67. *IV—11 & 12.* 68. *See earlier.* 69. *III—22.*

so as to make it more acceptable and intelligible to the general masses. To make this apprcach more impressive and effective the image of the Mother came in handy for them. "An unworthy son may be born, but there can never be a bad Mother"—कुपुत्रो जायेत क्वचिदपि कुमाता न भवति". This attitude is at the root of the Mothe-worship so popular with the Hindus. In this way also the so called polytheism grew out of the monotheism. Even in the hoary times of Vedas the seer was constrained to remark "Ekam hi sadvipra bahuda vadanti एकं हि सद्विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति "The Reality being one is interpreted in many ways". On the same analogy the poet-devotee of panchastavi has provided all the human attributes to Her,[70] and yet made her look super-human. Hence Tripura in essence being an abstract feeling of mind, has been painted in words pulsating with undivided devotion as a 'Loving Mother'; such discipline of mind is a mental experience beyond the domain of physical words.[71] This discipline will remain incomplete if the mention of the common belief is not made that Tripura त्रिपुरा is the consort of Tripurari[72] त्रिपुरारि (shiva). Propitiation of Tripura is still performed in Kashmir especially by a sect of Kashmiri Pandits, known as Tikus, presumably a Kashmiri rendering of त्रिक् trik.

The name of the composer :-

Unfortunately for us, the poet has maintained sphinx-like silence about his name, time or lineage throughout the length and breadth of his versified composition. However strange it might seem, but it is all the same

70. *Particularly in the II Chapter.*
71. *Panchastvi V-5.* 72. *Panchasiavi II-3.*

true about many Sanskrit authors of repute. Even Kalidasa, the prince among poets[73] has been also reticent about himself. Barring a few authors like Bilhana[74] and Ksemendra[75] the date and name of whole galaxy of Sanskrit luminaries of Kashmir is still a matter of research. In the Shaivistic literature, only Abhinavagupta has given his brief biographical sketch and some dates in one of his stotaras स्तोत्र devotional panegyrics. Herein his versatality has to be thanked, otherwise the Hindu attitude of mind by and large, feels shy of publicity more so, of self-advertisement.

In 1917 A. D. T. Ganapati Shastri brought out an edition of the first chapter of Panchastavi naming it as Laghustuti with the Sanskrit commentary of one Raghvananda.[77] On the authority of the commentator he put down the name of the poet as Laghu Bhattaraka : अस्याः कवेर्नामधेयं लघुभट्टारं इत्येवमवगतं श्रीमल्लघुभट्टारकः इति व्याख्यातृ वाक्यात्[78]. However, he has also referred to another commentary on the same treatise which to quote him is very voluminous and consists of nearly two thousand verses अति विपुला उपद्वि सहस्र श्लोकात्मिका by some Parameshwara chaiya. This commentary is not still out, hence nothing can be said about it. Had this commentary been made available after getting it printed, who knows, many knotty problems would have been solved. In his introduction the learned Shastri has not referred to Panchas-

73. *Dr. Keith-History of classical Sanskrit Literature.*

74. *xviii chapter of his Vikramankadeva charitam.*

75. *Vide concluding verses of Samaya matrika* समयमातृका *and Dashavtar charita* दशावतार चरिता

76. *Vide at the end of the brahti vimarshini Ishvara pratyabhijna, concluding verses of Paratrimshika, Bhairavastuti.*

77. *See 44 earlier.*

78. *c.f. Ibid-Introduction in Sanskrit.*

tavi at all, and has, for all practical purposes, thought these 21 verses to be an independent work, and not the first canto of Panchastavi. Curiously enough the commentator Raghavananda also has not made the mention of Panchastavi or its other cantos even once directly or indirectly. This intriguing silence poses many questions which deserve plausible answers. Firstly, it seems that Panchastavi as a whole is unknown in the south and only its first chapter has gained currency there. Therein also the original Stava स्तव: has been substituted by Stuti स्तुति even though both mean the same thing. Moreover, it is thought to be a composition of some Laghu Bhattaraka.

It is very well known that Shaivism of the south is predominontly dualistic in content. Madhvacharya[79] (A. D. 1199-1276) has described 'Shaiva Darshan' as a dualistic system, which is fundamentally at variance with the Monistic system which thrived only in Kashmir[80]. Nimbarka (A. D. 1162) emphasizes that it is from duality bheda भेद: that non-duality abheda अभेद: can be realized.[81] In the Tantric literature a clear division has been made on the basis of duality भेद: and non- duality अभेद:, hence the Tantras like Kamaja, Yogaja, etc. numbering ten have been ascribed to the dualistic school of Shaivism.[82] Therefore it seems surprising that a composition like this advocating non-duality should come from the south. As will be made clear later, Panchastavi as a whole, beyond any doubt, breathes an air of

---

79. *In his 'Sarva Darshan Sangraha'.*
80. *c.f. Kashmir Sahivism by J. C. Chatterji page 20; Dr. K. C. Pandey in his 'Abhinava Gupta–A study, page 111.*
81. *Vide his commentary on Brahma Sutras.*
82. *Abhinava Gupta - A study by Dr. K. C. Pandey page 75.*

being composed in Kashmir, and to crown all, by a Kashmiri author. Hence it seems plausible to surmise that the text of only one canto was commented upon by Raghvananda for propounding a faith which would have raised many eyebrows there. If we contend that the other four cantos were lost, it will not be tenable in the face of his not referring to any one of these in his commentary. For fear of being misinterpreted and also misunderstood, he stopped at the conclusion of the first chapter. Perhaps this will also solve the puzzle of substituting Stutih स्तुतिः for Stava स्तवः by him. Even though both these words mean the same thing, yet in usual practice Stava स्तवः is a collection of stutih; Had he used the original Stavah स्तवः he would have then betrayed the knowledge of other Stavas स्तवः also. Hence he changed the word to Stutih स्तुतिः without imparing its connotation as in the original, and also thereby implied that he knew nothing about other cantos. Our poet has used the Stutih स्तुति (praise) in the same context, which confirms our belief in the rightness of this conjecture.[83] Raghvananda wanted it to look like an independent and single Stutih स्तुतिः (praise) of the 'Supreme Energy' like 'Saundarya Lahri or Bhairavastuti भैरवस्तुतिः of Abhinava Gupta.

Bhattaraka or Bhattara is an appellation of respect or esteem joined with the names of either very learned Brahmins or Kings. Its diminitive Bhattah भट्टः still survives as a generic name for Kashmiri Pandits. In south no such practice is in vogue perhaps with the exception of Kumarilla Bhatta; so Laghu Bhattaraka seems also to be a Kashmiri Brahmin; 'Laghu' taken as an adjective would mean 'quick witted' or one who was

83. *Panchastavi II, 3 and at many other places.*

so proficient as to give the minutest details Laghava लाघवं (noun) about the Supreme Energy. Hence it can not be the actual name of the author but a commendatory epithet used by the commentator for his erudition and devotion, On the analogy of ralayauhabhedah रलयोऽ-भेदः (Panini's diction in his sutras) it strikes as the name of the commentator itself laghava लाघव becoming Raghava राघव. Hence we come to the conclusion that the commentator did not know the real name of the poet and to be on the safe side ascribed it to a quick-witted Kashmiri Brahmin Laghu Bhattarka लघु भट्टारकः and thereby inserted his name also with it.

Lakshmi Dhara in his commentary on Saundarya Lahri सौन्दर्य लहरी while quoting from Panchastavi has referred to its author as an 'Acharya' generally, but in one case has referred to Kalidasa particularly also in this context.[84] However, we can authoritatively say that he is not the famous Kalidasa of Raghuvamsha or Shakuntala repute. It might mean "A votary of Kali," some Acharya who was a devotee of Kali is perhaps meant by him.

In some manuscripts in the possession of the Kashmir Government Research Library the name of the author has been given as Laghavacharya, and in some as Acharya Prithvi Dhara, disciple of Shambhunatha.[85] In one Ms the name of the poet has been written as Shri Ramchandracharya श्री राम चन्द्राचार्यः. Kashmiri tradition ascribes it to Abhinava Gupta. In the quoted verses from Panchas-

84. *Ataiva kalidasa bhagvatpadaih sakala janani stave kathitam yatha 'Chatushpatrantah' etc. c.f. p-305 Madras edition 1957.* अत एव कालिदासभगवत्पादैसकलजननीस्तवे कथितं यथा चतुष्पत्रान्तः ....

85. *Who initiated Abhinava Gupta in the Tantric lore.*

tavi used by commentrators of 'Vidyarnava' and 'Saubhagya Ratnakara' the author has been mentioned as Dharmacharyah. Nityananda, the commentator of Tripura Mahimastotra also corroborates the same view. Harabhatta Shastri, the reputed local scholar[86] also has taken Dharmacharyah to be its author.

The very fact that there is no unanimity of views about the authorship of Panchastavi leads us easily to think that actually the author has wanted to remain annonymous to which view the last verse of the first canto also subscribes. The use of Laghustvatmani लघुस्त्वात्मनि (insiginficance of his own self) debars him to proclaim his name. This is the zenith of humility and knowledge has been acclaimed as the giver of the same.[87] As to the names Acharya, कालिदास: Kalidasa and Dharmacharyah धर्माचार्य: we may say that actually these are not the proper names but assumed ones. Acharya आचार्य may mean a precepter and Dharmacharyah धर्माचार्य: accordingly indicates a preceptor of Dharma, here Shaiva Dharmah शैव धर्म: ostensibly. At times even scribes when not finding the name of the author therein, may have put in their name in his stead. In the absence of any Indisputable and authentic evidence, we are forced to conclude that the authorship of Panchastavi is an unresolved mystery.

VI. Date of composition :

Panchastavi is the quintessence of Tantric scriptures of non-dualistic school. The earliest extant reference to

86. *Vide his Sanskrit commentary on Panchastavi, published in parts by Kashmir Govt' Research Deptt. 1963.*
87. *Vidya dadati vinayam (Hitopodesha)* विद्या ददाति विनयं ।

its versess used as quotations are found in the Saraswati Kanthabharana of King Bhoja. The probable date of the composition of Saraswati Kanthabharan सरस्वती कण्ठाभरणं is between 1030-1040 A. D.[88] Hence Panchastavi must have been composed much earlier to it; by the time of Bhoja its poetic merit (leaving devotional apart) must have been established on firm footing, only then it could deserve a place in this work on poetics. Moreover Saundarya Lahri whose authorship is ascribed to Shankaracharya, does in a way, treat the same thought as couched in the Panchastavi.

For this very reason Lakshmi Dhara has quoted profusely from it. It is very difficult to say as to which composition of these two is earlier; in other words, what debt they owe to each other is a subject of profound research. However it can be said without any fear of contradiction that the subject matter of these two composstions being similar, as also the phrase and idiom at many places, both these might have been composed at the same time when the devotional climate in Kashmir was vibrating with 'Shaivisttc Monism'. It is also believed that Shankaracharya was converted to this line of thinking during his sojourn in Kashmir [89]. Local tradition of Kashmir also confirms it. Shankara's date has been fixed between 788-820 A.D. [90]. So it seems probable that Panchastavi was also composed during this perid. Even if it may be argued that Panchastavi is posterior to Saundarya Lahari, still it could not have been composed

88. *Dr. P. V. Kane, History of Sanskrit poetics, page 261.*
89. *Shankar digvijaya* शंकर दिग्विजय *XVI, 54-80*
90. *Vide introduction to the Bhagvad Gita by Dr. Radhakrishnan, Page 16.*

after 1030–1050 A.D. in any case [91]. The upper limit may be fixed at 788-820 A.D. Shankara's visit to Kashmir and consequently composing Saundarya Lahari by him, and the lowest limit is furnished by the date of Bhoja's treatise on poetics (Saraswati Kanthabharna i.e. 1030-1050 A.D. During this Span of period our poet's composition must have seen the light of the day. So in all fairness to the author, it may be concluded that Panchastavi must have been composed in the latter half of ninth century and by the time of Bhoja its verses had attained sufficient fame and credence for being included in his work.

VII. Common authorship of five cantos.

One more point deserves consideration before we conclude this brief study, whether this is the work of one and the same author, who-so-ever, he might have been. On the strength of the internal evidence as well as the external, we have to answer this query in affirmative. The data available to us from the internal evidence conclusively points towards this hypothesis. Besides the, astounding similarities of phrase and idiom and even repetition of words, the reference made to Vatsa Raja Udyana, who was blessed with plenty and opulence by the Divine Mother, in more than one cantos, corroborates this view [92]. Not only this, in the second factual reference, there is mention of a famous Kashmiri king pravarsena also, who has been equated with king Udyana. The use of अपि api (also) in the verse itself makes this inference obvious. The king Udyana as also the "Pravara" (Pravarsena) is the

91. c.f. Panchastavi-I-12.   *92. Panchastavi II-7.*

correct translation and not 'Udyana pravara' or very esteemed Udyana. Pravara herein is not a qualifying adjective of Udyana, but a noun, name of another king Praversena, the use of api (also) can be justified only then, otherwise it seems redundant The translation thus would be "king Udyana (as referred to already in I-12 but also Praversena (api अपि) which agrees with the singlular sah स: in the third line, otherwise this should have been tau तौ (these two). In this verse, therefore only an implicit reference to Udyana has been made. Praversena has been obviously mentioned explicitly. If the poet had meant to refer to Udyana again, he could not have escaped the blemish of repetition पुनरुक्ति and as such his verses could not have been cited as examples by rhetoricians like Bhoja and Mammata.

Taking this suggestive import into account, we can easily identify as to which Praversena is meant by the poet, as Kalhana has given two kings of this name in his Rajatarangini. It seems praversena II (590 A.D. roughly) who was a great warrior and an ardent believer like Vatsa Raja Udyana. In Kalhana's own words "He founded the city of Pravarpura on the outskirts of Sharika Parbat, which formed the centre of the new city"[93]. This Sharika Parbat, now known as Hari Parbat is regarded as the abode of the Goddess. So the cause of establishing the capital around Sharika Parbat is not far to seek. Being the recipient of favours from the Goddess [94] he wanted to remain permanently under the canopy of Her feet literally. Moreover, verses not only from the I and V cantos, but from II, III and IV have also been quoted by later writers, this fact beyond any

93. *Rajatarangini Book III-361.* 94. *Panchastavi II-7.*

doubt establishes that these were the product of a single poet's imagination.[95]

VIII. His Kashmiri origin.

He was a Kashmiri by birth needs no further elucidation. The monistic Shaivism was founded and propagated only here. It could not catch up with other schools of this philosophy, more especially in the south [96]. This poetic composition is found as a whole in Kashmir alone, and from very remote times its verses are on the tongue of the Kashmiri Brahmins. In this connection reference to purely Kashmiri herbs like trupsi त्रुपसी [97] also points eloquently towards this conclusion. Moreso, reference to Praversena II discussed earlier, also substantiates this view. Reference to Udyana in this respect is not so important, as he has been an ideal with most of the Sanskrit poets and Dramatists for his amors, exploits and bravery. Praversena is known only to Kashmiris; Kashmiri scholars have often referred to him, [98] but no mention of him has been made anywhere in Sanskrit literature outside Kashmir. Tripura Pooja is exclusively carried on here without any break from times inmemorial. Tripura worship outside Kashmir does not seem to be popular, even Tantriks over there have chosen kali काली as their Tutelar Deity इष्ट देवी. Only the Brahmins of this place persist with this name of the Goddess.

---

95. *Sarswati Kanthabharna by king Bhoja, (ii) Kavya Prakasha of Mammata (iii) Matrika Chakra Viveka of Shivananda (iv) Sarva darshan sangraha of MadhvaCharya (v) Kuvlayananda of Appaya Dixit. (vi) Vidyarnava Tantra. (vii) Saubhagya Ratnakara (viii) Lakshmi Dhara in his commentary on Saundarya Lahari.* 96. *See earlier.* 97. *The cucumber creeper of a special variety only found around lakes of which there is abundance in Kashmir. Botanical term for it is Adiatum Capillus Veneris.*

98. *for instance-Bilhana-XVIII chapter of Vikramankadeva charitam*

IX. Epilogue.

In the end, it looks quite appropriate to invoke the 'Supreme Energy' in the words of the poet himself who is bold enough like other true Shaivas of Kashmir to announce that caste restriction is no bar to Her propitaion; but only the steadfast intellect and unflinching faith overcomes any impediments whatsoever, ushersing in a span of material opulence and spiritual ascendancy for the devotee.[99]

In this context it will be of interest to note here that the charisma of 'Shakti' worship here in Kashmir, prompted 'Adi Shankaracharya' to pay this tribute to Her immanence and transcendance :-

"Oh Youthful Spouseof Shiva, Thou art Mind, Ether, Air, Fire, Water ,Earth and dost thereby transform Thyself into the universe. Nevertheless there is nothing beyond Thee. By Thy play Thou dost manifest Thy consciousness and Bliss in the body of the universe.[100]"

---

99. I-14

100. Saundarya Lahari, Verse, 35; Translation John woodroffe.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR :-

1. English Translation with explanatory notes of 'Shiva-Sutras' of Vasu Gupta.
2. English Translation with explanatory notes of 'Paramarth Saara' of Abhinavagupta.
3. Anthology of Modern Hindi Poetry—2 Vols.
4. Anthology of Modern Hindi one Act plays.
5. Anthology of Modern Hindi Prose.
6. Mysticism in Kashmiri Poetry.
7. Hinduism in Kashmir. (J & K Govt. Gazetteer).
8. "Habba-Khatoon"—A study.
9. Reshi-Cult of Kashmir.

SERIES III :-

1. Kashmir and Indian Poetics.
2. Sanskrit Chronicles and Sultans of Kashmir.
3. Kashmir Shaivism—An Introduction.